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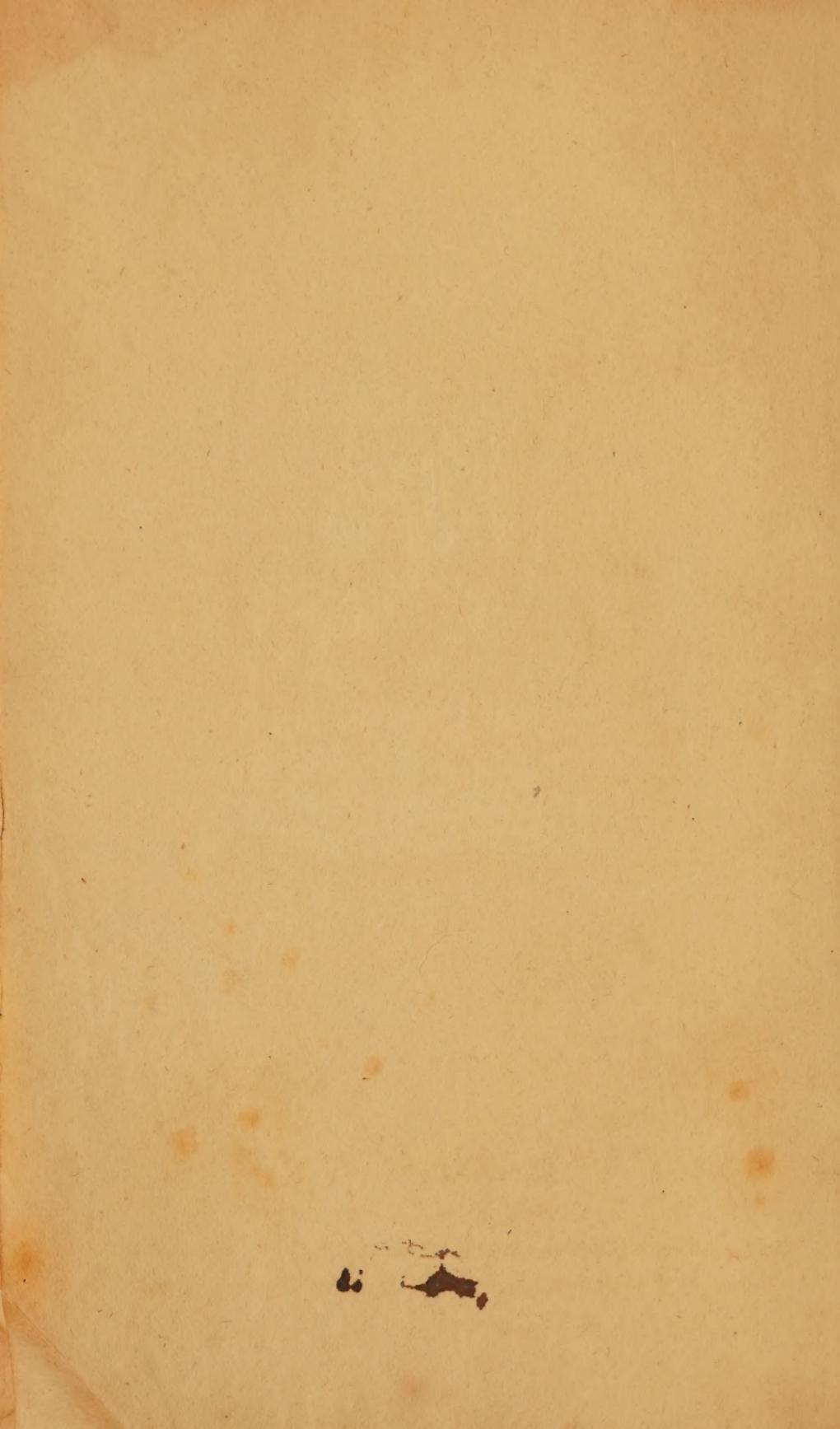
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a course of theological
lectures on the peculiar



A
COURSE
OF
THEOLOGICAL LECTURES,
ON THE
PECULIAR DOCTRINES
OF
CHRISTIANITY.

BY
THE REV. JOSEPH ROBERTSON,
EDINBURGH.

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1806.

TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
HENRY ERSKINE OF AMMONDELL, M. P.
HIS MAJESTY'S ADVOCATE FOR SCOTLAND;

IN TESTIMONY OF ESTEEM
FOR THOSE SPLENDID TALENTS,
EXERTED FOR THE
PROSPERITY OF THE NATION,

THE
DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLIC JUSTICE,
AND THE
DEFENCE OF THE INJURED,

THIS
COURSE OF THEOLOGICAL LECTURES
IS MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED BY THE
AUTHOR,

PREFACE.

THE manners and taste of every age acquire a peculiar character. This peculiarity strongly influences the writings of every period.

During the dark ages, the human genius was almost dormant, and few efforts were made, either to instruct or to amuse. When political arrangements paved the way to the circulation of that knowledge which had enriched and adorned ancient Greece, the powers of the mind began to awake from their long slumbers, and different writings appeared, adapted to the state of civilization, and to the general taste. One class of writers succeeded another, and those whose penetration discovered the true nature of the general taste, were the most successful.

In some instances, it will be granted that the writers of a particular period have as strong an influence in forming the public taste, as the public taste has in forming the complexion of their writings ; and it may indeed form an important subject of discussion, whether general utility requires that the writers should form, polish, and refine the general taste, or whether the reverse ought to obtain. It is obvious, that when strength of genius, purity of intention, accuracy of discernment, and illustrious talents appear, then general utility requires that the writers should rather govern, than be governed. It will also appear sufficiently evident to the reflecting mind, that the struggle between these two principles has been at some times considerably violent, whilst at other times the one has been constrained to yield to superior force.

Corresponding to this idea, whilst we find that the general taste of one age was delighted with Legends and Manuals, another was gratified with the perusal and translation of the Gre-
cian and Roman classics, which paved the way to the intricate discussions of philosophy, and both operated to produce that vain affectation of learning, and the disfiguring of the theo-
logical page with Latin quotations, which tended rather to dazzle and perplex, than either to

inform the understanding, or to better the heart.

The improvements of science arriving later in this island, the theological writers on the continent, at a more early period, began to cultivate a nervous, correct, and dignified style. The models of composition which they studied in other departments, they successfully imitated in their own. The cruel persecution, however, which succeeded the Restoration, woefully operated to check the progress of literature in this island. But, during the last century, the British genius acquired new vigour, and, unsatisfied with equalling, has surpassed the brightest efforts upon the continent.

Of this, the displays of rational, accurate, chaste, and nervous eloquence, shown in every department of knowledge, is sufficient proof. In this happy island genius has become victorious, and claims the honour to have regulated, improved, and embellished the public taste. Now she assumes that dignified station which is her natural right, and no longer deigns to submit either to caprice or to ignorance.

The eloquence of the North British pulpit, and the moral instructions of her press, have

participated of the advantages of the general improvements; and the writings of many eminent Scottish divines, during the progress of the last century, are full evidence that our church has not been deficient in maintaining the honours, and circulating the advantages of general literature. This circumstance gives her members at least a claim to public encouragement, whether they confine themselves to the investigations of theology, or pass over to aid in the researches of history, or the discoveries of philosophy.

This volume was begun several years ago, and since that time has employed some of the Author's best hours. He originally intended to have retained it longer in his possession, but the solicitations of those whose opinion he highly values, prevailed upon him to offer it to the public in its present state. But, in his humble station among Divines, nothing would have induced him to intrude his work upon the public, unless that he had been conscious that it would in some degree tend to the illustration of the great doctrines of Revelation.

The favourable reception given to the Author's Letters and Dialogues on the Lord's Supper *, of which several thousands have already

* A new and improved edition will soon be put to press.

been circulated, whilst it encourages him in the present work, fills him with no small degree of solicitude, lest this should not meet with similar success. Of this one thing, however, he is confident, that the same system of opinions will be found in this as in his former work, and he hopes also in an improved degree.

He is aware that in some instances there will be found a repetition of sentiment and of language, but this was occasioned from the desire of rendering every Lecture, as far as possible, a distinct whole. The views given of the leading doctrines of Christianity in this volume will, he trusts, be found correspondent to the sacred oracles, and to the standards of the reformed churches; and if, in some instances, he has ventured to differ from those who have wrote before him, it was more from a regard to truth, than a desire of novelty.

EDINBURGH, }
July 18. 1806. }

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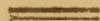
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THEOLOGICAL LECTURES.

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE.

ROMANS i. 20. *For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his Eternal Power and Godhead.*

THE illustration of the peculiar doctrines of revelation, on which we are now to enter, is a work both important and arduous. It is important, on account of the momentous consequences which it unfolds, namely, the final happiness or the final misery of mankind. It is arduous, on account of the deep and intricate nature of the various subjects which it embraces, for justly to delineate the heavenly nature, beautiful connection, and beneficial tendency of these, require the grandest efforts of human intellect.

The belief of the being and attributes of God is almost universal. "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." It is obvious, that no creature or thing is possessed of a self-creating power; but we behold numerous creatures and things existing;

therefore the mind is naturally led to infer, that they have proceeded from some original and uncreated *Cause*. Nature, reason, and revelation, unite in evincing the existence and necessity of such a great and glorious Being. Displaying his Almighty power, wisdom, and goodness, he created the universe, stored it with inhabitants, and has been ever liberally providing for their accommodation and comfort.

But man was the peculiar favourite of Heaven. Both with respect to natural endowments and superior destination, his Maker was peculiarly beneficent. “God created “ man in his own image, and gave him dominion over the “ fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over “ every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” Descended from the origin of all purity, man was adorned with innocence, and crowned with glory. Creation, in all her beauty, delighted his senses, and with all her riches loaded his table. His body, free from the seeds of mortality, enjoyed the most regular temperature, and displayed the most beautiful proportion. Nor were far superior glories unknown. Created after the image of God, the soul of man was endowed with many mental and amiable excellencies. Then she exerted all her new-born vigour, in contemplating the nature, perfections, and works of God, and with a strength and vivacity unexemplified in the after days of guilt, explored the various regions of information. To her, all that respected either utility or pleasure was alike accessible. The cup of human felicity was full.

The introduction of guilt, however, sullied the glory of creation, and embittered the cup of human joy. Then the minds of our first parents became corrupted, enfeebled, and perverse, and their bodies weak, infected, and

mortal. Then commenced the reign of vice. Then the fertile earth groaned under the pressure of the entailed curse, and was either destined to barrenness, or constrained to yield "thorns and thistles." The guilty pair were driven from Eden, and doomed to toil and sorrow. The wonderful sagacity, and discriminating knowledge, displayed by Adam, in giving appropriate names to all the creatures, was suddenly changed into the grossest ignorance and folly. Hence, in the infatuation of his mind, he attempted to "hide himself from "the presence of the Lord God among the trees of "the garden."

It is more a matter of curiosity than utility, to enquire what was the original language in which man conveyed his thoughts to his first companion. Suited to his nature and circumstances, man was to employ both a *natural* and an *artificial* language. It is probable, then, that the mode which Adam employed for conveying his thoughts, was similar to that which is still employed by his descendants.

Natural language is composed of those signs, and gestures, and expressions, by which he is qualified to communicate the stronger passions of fear, terror, and delight; and also, by which he can indicate the strong sensations of hunger, or thirst. This language is common to man with the inferior tribes, who, by different signs, gestures, and motions, can express all these various sensations and passions.

But man is in all respects superior to the lower tribes, and particularly in respect of language. He is favoured with the power of speech, which exalts him to superior dignity, declares the existence, and qualifies him to communicate the perceptions, of reason. Natu-

ral language being unable to express all the perceptions of the mind, different signs were soon invented to express different thoughts, and every successful attempt stimulated to further exertions. Reason will always vindicate her superiority. In proportion as the rational powers extended their energy, the channel of communication, through invented language, enlarged on every side: Every new idea required a new term to denote its existence, and the mind which discovered the thought, also invented the mode of expression. Fact, accords with these remarks, and the history of knowledge shows, that the improvement of the mind, and the improvement of language, have uniformly corresponded.

The smallest effort of genius paves the way to a greater. After the labours of a few ages, written language approached to the aid of vocal. The varying channel of tradition was too fluctuating to preserve acquired knowledge, and human ingenuity devised the method of recording truth by visible signs. In this field also, the efforts of reason advanced with progressive dignity, and the art of printing was in process of time discovered. Whatever were the stores of knowledge previous to this memorable æra, they have since been greatly increased. Under the diffusing and careful hand of printing, the different branches of information have been reduced to a consistency and utility formerly unknown.

Human invention suggested the propriety, and the art of printing afforded the means, of arranging and giving a scientific form to the various branches of knowledge. The knowledge of God and his works includes the whole circle of possible information; therefore, the numerous branches of knowledge divide themselves

into two general classes. The first includes the knowledge of intelligent beings, and the second that of material substances. The divine nature of God, the exalted nature of angels; the intellectual nature of man, together with the investigation of all their divine, angelic and human powers, perfections, operations and volitions, are included under the former. The various material substances of which the universe is composed, with all their properties, combinations, utility, and excellence, together with the wonderful mechanism of the human body, are included in the latter.

In the progress of human exertion, the general mass of knowledge was arranged, and assumed different names, according to its respective properties. One general appellation, namely *science*, has been applied to the whole field of knowledge. The term denotes the various branches of information.

An acquaintance with the original structure and different powers of language has received the name of Grammar. The advantages resulting from the knowledge of this science, in ordinary conversation, in the transactions of society, in the pursuits of literature, and in the interpretation of the sacred oracles, are sufficiently obvious. But the successful discovery of truth requires man to advance with regularity and precision. Hence Logic approaches to his aid, and by specifying the different classes of words and ideas, and teaching how to combine and arrange these into distinct propositions, according to their nature, and these again into regular arguments leading to undoubted conclusions, the mind is enabled to discover the essential difference between truth and error. This science may be defined the science of investigation.

It is both a noble and an edifying branch of knowledge ; and were its advantages more generally understood, it would be eagerly studied by all those who aspire to rational dignity.

But man is a moral being, and science does not neglect him in this capacity. And that science which teaches man the different powers of his mind, the uses to which these may be applied, and how to reach the greatest moral happiness of which his nature is susceptible, has been denominated Moral Philosophy. This science, by an examination of the principles of the human constitution, and an investigation of the relative circumstances in which man is placed towards God, ascertains the general rules of a virtuous conduct. Nor are the advantages of moral philosophy to be rejected, because her true nature has been frequently misunderstood, and shamefully perverted. The man who unites piety and science in one character, will render her eminently beneficial to the interests of true religion, and highly dignifying to human nature.

A knowledge of the material system of the universe, has obtained different names according to the respective natures of the subjects investigated. The survey and knowledge of the external surface of the earth, has obtained the name of Geography. Astronomy is the survey and investigation of the heavenly bodies, and Mathematics is an hand-maid science, both to astronomy and to all the branches of natural philosophy. This science ascertains relations and proportions in quantity and number, and also the mathematical truths resulting from the nature of quantities or numbers compared. Natural philosophy is the knowledge and investigation of the nature and properties of all the parts of material

substance. Philosophy, therefore, taken in an extensive sense, may be defined the knowledge of nature applied to practical purposes. These sciences are all beneficial, to exercise and invigorate the mental powers, to gratify the enquiring mind, to regulate opinion and conduct, and, under the guidance of reason and revelation, to aid in the interpretation of the sacred oracles.

The Divine Science, however, or the knowledge of the sacred oracles, excels all others, both in dignity and utility. As this science treats of God, of angels, of the human soul, and of the various duties incumbent on man to his God, to his fellow-creatures, and to his own soul, it has obtained the name of DIVINITY. The reason is obvious, because it is the contemplation of divine excellence, and the method of rendering the immortal soul completely happy.

God is the fountain and source of all intelligence. He only is perfect in excellence, and beyond the possibility of improvement. "He is the Father of Lights, with whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning." Angels being finite creatures, are capable of an endless progression in the path of perfection. The mind of man is also capable of unbounded enlargement. A variety of facts, in the history of the human mind, clearly shows, that increased knowledge, and mental improvement, are qualified to exalt one man almost as high above another, as man is naturally exalted above the brute creation. What is the difference between the savage roaming in the desert, and the man who has enjoyed all the advantages of civilization and social improvement? What is the difference between the ignorant peasant, and the man whose mind is enlightened by

universal knowledge? Nay, what is the difference between the endowments of the same man at one period of his life, compared with those of another? What, I ask, constitutes this amazing difference? Is it sufficient to reply, that the Former of Minds has varied his bounty in respect of mental vigour? Certainly not. It will indeed be granted, that a vast variety is obvious in this respect, and that radical vigour is necessary in order to intellectual eminence, but it will likewise be found, that mental eminence originates more from improvement, than from any natural difference in the bounty of Heaven. The difference chiefly exists in mental cultivation.

After these general remarks, it may be expected, that some account should be given of the plan of the following work, and of the reasons for adopting it.

With respect to the nature of the plan, I have endeavoured to consult general utility. Numerous advantages result from a regular illustration of the principal doctrines of revelation. God is a God of order. The human mind also delights in order, therefore a connected method of conveying instruction, will doubtless appear, to every reflecting mind, to be by far the most eligible. Such a method shows the beautiful union of Scripture doctrines, and besides aiding the memory, prevents unnecessary repetitions. Convinced of these facts, the following arrangement appears calculated to accelerate the acquisition of religious knowledge.

The Sacred Oracles being the standard of all religious truth, their inspiration is the first thing that claims our attention. Then follows

The truth of Christianity. The Doctrine of the Trinity. The Divinity of Christ. The Divinity of the Holy Ghost. The Character of fallen Man. The Character of Christ the Mediator. The Work of Reconciliation. The Persons reconciled, or the Doctrine of Election.

After these, the method of Reconciliation effected by the General Call of the Gospel, by Justification, by Adoption, by Sanctification. The Evidence of an Actual participation of Redemption. The Perseverance of the Saints. The Resurrection of the Body. The Doctrine of a future Judgment. The Misery of the finally Impenitent, And the Felicity of the Righteous in a coming World.

Allow me to add, that whatever may be the reception of these Lectures with the Public, I would fondly hope, that they will meet, at least, with the approbation and encouragement of those under my immediate charge, and that, by the blessing of God, these will reap some benefit from this humble attempt to promote their eternal welfare. May I also be permitted to indulge the pleasing hope, that this work will be rendered useful to you, and to your children, and to your children's children, and that it will be a memorial in your families, of your minister, and of the doctrine taught in this place, when the voice that now addresses you can do so no more; and that, when numbered with the dead, by means of these Lectures, though dead, he shall continue to speak. "May the Father of Lights, from whom "cometh down every good and perfect gift, render "these eminently beneficial to all who now hear, or "who may afterwards peruse these Lectures." Amen.

LECTURE I.

The Inspiration of the Scriptures.

2 PETER i. 21. “*For the prophecy came not in old time, by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*”

THE delineation of the nature and excellence of morals, is the most important and sublime employment that can occupy the intellectual powers. This branch of knowledge divides itself into two parts, historical and scientific. The historical includes the record of the influence of morals upon human society, and the scientific the doctrines revealed, and the precepts enjoined by the great Creator to his rational creatures.

It is the last of these branches that now falls under discussion. Nor does our plan embrace more than the peculiar doctrines of scripture. These were formerly announced, and the first in order is the Inspiration of the Sacred Writings.

To excite reverence for their authority, confidence in their instructions, and consolation in their promises, it is of great importance to form just and accurate ideas concerning the inspiration of the scriptures. Convinced of their divine authority, the mind bends with humble submission, and yields a cheerful obedience. A rational assent is given; by a solemn ap-

peal disputes are terminated; and the decisions of scripture are final. By an unerring rule, both opinion and conduct are regulated, and the glories of immortality, in all their reality and importance are placed before the mind.

Error often originates from mistaking the meaning of words, especially those which express complex ideas; hence the definition of words, paves the way to accurate description. Inspiration in Medical science, denotes that motion of the breast, by which air is conveyed into the lungs. In Divine science, it denotes a supernatural influence upon the mind of man, raising him to a degree of improvement, far superior to the natural exertions of his mental powers. The divine inspiration experienced by the writers of scripture, denotes such an influence exercised by the Holy Spirit over their intellectual faculties, as perfectly qualified them for communicating to mankind the secret designs of God, respecting salvation, not in the "words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the "Holy Ghost teacheth." What these men saw and heard, they were enabled faithfully to relate; and in the relation their minds were raised to superior excellence, and divine strength, displayed by elevation of thought, grandeur of description, and sublimity of language. In other instances, the immediate revelations of Heaven were vouchsafed, concerning subjects which depended entirely upon the unlimited determinations of God, and his perfect knowledge of future events. "Prophecy came not in old times by the will of men, "but holy men of God spake as they were moved by "the Holy Ghost." That such a revelation was actually given to mankind, is proved by the following evidence:

The progress of inspiration indicates its cœlestial origin.

The progressive motion by which the operations of Providence are regulated, is one of the general laws of the Divine Government. The perfections of God are unbounded in their exertions, and he could effect instantaneously every purpose, but his infinite wisdom is displayed in accomplishing his designs in a gradual manner. He could have formed the universe in a moment, but he chose to employ *six* days. He could have stored it with myriads of creatures at once, but he chose to replenish by gradual succession. Natural productions and moral changes are also progressive. This method universally obtains among the works of God.

The same law appears to have regulated the unfoldings of inspiration. The full splendour of revelation, did not beam upon man in one luminous hour; but the obscurity of the morning, preceded the brightness of the noon-day. Dark and mysterious revelations first indicated the will of Heaven, and more conspicuous and unveiled manifestations succeeded. Accommodated to the necessities and circumstances of man, the scheme of mercy was revealed. A few progressive displays, indicated to mortals the general plan of the Divine government, and induced them to hope for more conspicuous discoveries; and the gradual display of revelation, from the obscure hint in Eden, to the more ample description of the prophets, and to the final manifestation of the gracious design of reconciliation, certainly afford a strong evidence that this work was of God. It was performed in the same manner as all his other works, clearly proving that it also proceeded from

him. Its exact agreement shows its Divine origin. God is of one mind, and all his works are uniform.

The facts recorded in these books, establish their inspiration.

The past facts prove a Divine guidance. Moses is the acknowledged writer of the first five of these books. Their ancient simplicity, united to the unanimous testimony of the Jewish nation, confer this honour upon their Legislator. The Jews as well as the Greeks, the Romans, or the Persians, are certainly entitled to credit respecting the Author, and the antiquity of their laws. Their evidence concerning Moses, is as valid as that of the Athenians concerning *Lycurgus*, the Romans concerning *Numa Pompilius*, or the Persians concerning *Zoroaster*. The Jews, however, are not the only witnesses of this important fact, for among Pagan Writers, the laws of Moses are occasionally mentioned. The expence and danger attending the observance of the worship enjoined in these books, induced the Jews to use the greatest diligence and accuracy, in ascertaining this important truth, and, therefore, they are more entitled to credit than any other nation, concerning the Author of their Institutions. These books also contain the history, transactions, laws, and statutes communicated by Moses, respecting their political œconomy, their religious worship, their private conduct, and their domestic duties. It naturally follows, that the Jews would never have submitted to such a system, without the fullest conviction of its cœlestial origin.

Independant of these facts, a whole generation were eye-witnesses to the life, character, and transactions of Moses. It is therefore absurd, to suppose that any deceit, fraud, or collusion, could have been practised

by him. How was it possible, he could deceive them in performing the miracles of vengeance in the land of Ham? What deceit could be used, when the Red Sea was divided, and the flower of Egypt were enclosed in its watery embrace, while the sons of Jacob passed through in safety? When, during their journey in the desert, they were guided by the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night? When quails surrounded their camp? When, manna fell around their tents? When at the command of Moses, the rock poured forth water? When God descended, in awful majesty, upon Mount Sinai? When the mount was involved in flames? When the trumpet sounded louder and louder, until He proclaimed the law in the hearing of all the people? And when Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and their associates, were swallowed up by the opening earth? By what possible means could Moses have induced the thousands of Israel to give credit to these things, unless they actually came to pass? Certainly "these things were "not done in a corner." Nay, cast the eye over the code of laws, whether political, ceremonial, or moral, and consider their severity, expensive nature, and the danger connected with their observance, and the truth will appear with additional lustre. Thrice in the year their males were commanded to repair to Jerusalem, to adore the God of Abraham. Who, then, was to protect their country from the invading foe? At stated intervals, they were prohibited from sowing their ground. How, then, were the ravages of the devouring famine to be prevented? They were forbidden to use horses, or chariots, in their wars. How then could they, on equal terms, meet the enemy, in the field of battle? Nothing but the miraculous interposition of Providence,

could have enabled them to comply with such regulations, and nothing but the fullest conviction, that they were the mandates of Heaven, could have induced them to persevere in their observance.

But the books of Moses contain many facts, which could be known only by Divine revelation.

It is not sufficient to say, that through the channel of oral tradition, these were transmitted from father to son, and that Moses was only the first historian of his country, who, similar to Heroditus in Greece, committed them to writing. The varying channel of tradition was too imperfect to convey such accurate information, concerning the creation of the universe, the origin of the human race, the history of the days of innocence, the nature of the command enjoined in Eden, the fatal seduction, by which that command was violated, and the expulsion of the guilty pair from the delightful bowers of Paradise. Without the immediate guidance of the Divine Spirit, how could Moses, with such confidence and accuracy, have related this accumulation of important and intricate facts? This reasoning also applies to the account transmitted by Moses, of the transactions of Adam's family, the origin of sacrifices, the narrative of antedeluvian depravity, the destruction of that wicked generation by the flood, the history of the man who was saved from the general overthrow, and honoured to be the father and founder of a new world; the confounding of languages, the general prevalence of idolatory, the singular call of Abraham, and the rise and progress of the Jewish nation. This part of sacred history, likewise lays the foundation, and opens the wonderful scene of Providence, and of Redemption, consequently without

Divine assistance, such a rational and consistent foundation could never have been laid.

The same arguments refer to the other Sacred Writers, who relate past transactions. Some of the Evangelists wrote a considerable time after the days of Christ, and destitute of supernatural guidance, they could neither have been so accurate nor so minute. That man must be unacquainted with the weakness of the human memory, and the general imbecillity of the mental powers, who does not perceive the necessity of Divine assistance, in recording the numerous sermons, and various transactions of our Lord. This matter, however, is determined beyond the possibility of doubt, by the promise of our Lord, to send the Spirit upon his disciples after his resurrection, "to bring all things to their remembrance."

The prophetic facts also support the claim of Inspiration.

Human resolution is not always realized in action. A defect of wisdom in the contrivance, may render it improper to act; a change of sentiment may give birth to hesitation; an alteration of conduct in another, for whose benefit the action was to be performed, may likewise produce different sensations in the benevolent mind; or a want of power to effect what was intended, may prevent the execution of the beneficial purpose. These things, however, cannot affect the conduct of Him, who is the "Father of lights, with whom is no "variableness, neither shadow of turning." According to this view of the Divine Character, all the predictions concerning the resolutions of God, may be denominated facts, because they will all be realized in their proper

and destined season. Such is the meaning now appropriated to prophetic facts.

Prophecy depends upon the knowledge of futurity. This knowledge, is peculiar to the true God, and that by which he is distinguished from the "vanities" of the Gentiles. They have no knowledge, that set "up the wood of their graven image, and pray into a "God that cannot save. Tell ye, and bring them near ; "yea, let them take counsel together ; who hath declar- "ed this from ancient time? Who hath told it from "that time? Have not I the Lord, and there is no "God beside me, a just God, and a Saviour." Hence when any person foretells future events, of which he could not acquire the knowledge, by any natural means, he is certainly inspired, and God, by him, reveals his will to mankind. The fulfilment of the predictions of the prophet form a decisive proof of his inspiration, of the Divine origin of his writings, and of the heavenly tendency of his doctrine. In this view, a prophecy, similar to a miracle, attests the validity of the prophet's character. Nor will the righteous Creator permit the man, upon whom he has conferred the spirit of prophecy, to intermingle his own sentiments with those of inspiration, and impose them upon mankind as the dictates of Heaven. The goodness of God will also prevent his offspring from being deceived, in a matter which concerns their most momentous and eternal interests.

But numerous predictions are contained in the Old and New Testament, therefore their Divinity stands confessed.

Many predictions were uttered, both by Moses and David, concerning the vicissitudes of their nation, and

the coming of the Deliverer of Israel. The writings denominated prophetical, are stored with predictions, both respecting the Jews, and the neighbouring nations; such as the fate of Egypt, the burden of Moab, the ruin of Tyre, the capture of Babylon, and what would be their future degradation and infamy. The lines of prophecy, however, all centered in the Messiah. "To him all the Law, and the prophets, gave witness." Favoured as we now are, both with the predictions and their fulfilment, the most ample evidence is afforded of the inspiration of the Scriptures. It is foretold, that Christ should descend from David, that a Virgin should be his mother, that Bethlehem should be the honoured place of his nativity, that, anointed with the Spirit, he should assume the character of a public Teacher, perform great and beneficial miracles, that his countrymen should reject, despise, persecute, and put him to death, that he should rise from the grave, ascend to heaven, and that his gospel should be rejected by the Jews, yet received by the Gentiles. Nay, altho' the capital punishment of crucifixion was then unknown among the Jews, yet indications are given, with no small degree of precision, concerning the manner of his death, and the time is distinctly specified. A glance over the pages of the evangelists show, that all these had their exact accomplishment in Christ.

But the predictions, concerning the humiliation and glory of Christ, attract particular attention. At one time he is represented as a worm, and no man; at another, as a prince higher than the kings of the earth; as a man of sorrows, yet made exceedingly glad; as despised and rejected, yet honoured and followed; and as dying, yet abolishing death. Unaided

by heaven, how could the human mind form such a character, in which the extremes of abasement and of exaltation should be combined, and in which the frailties of humanity should be associated with the glories of the Godhead. But this character, however wonderful, was actually realized in *the coming of Jesus*, the glory of his person, the success of his gospel, the beneficial consequences that followed, and the revolutions which have happened to the church since that period.

The mysterious facts in scripture, also add their suffrage.

But the enemies of revelation say, that the scriptures contain doctrines which are mysterious and contrary to reason, and therefore cannot be from God. "Every " thing," say they, " contained in a revelation, should " be perfectly intelligible ; and since reason is the gift " of God, doctrines which proceed from him cannot " contradict it, but must owe their existence to the " folly or knavery of men."

There is, however, an essential difference between a doctrine being superior to reason, and contrary to it. It is admitted, that there are mysteries in revelation, but that these are contrary to reason, is denied. What mind so feeble, as not to perceive the rational possibility of a thing being superior to his mental powers, which does not contradict his moral sense. The senses of man, aided by his perceptions, may easily discover that the pile of grass which grows from the ground, receives all its nourishment from it ; but the chemical connection between that plant and the earth, far transcends all human sagacity. And who can assign the specific rea-

son, why the light of the sun induces the grass uniformly to assume the colour of green? If then there are inexplicable mysteries attending a pile of grass, what may be expected to attend the nature of the great Lord of the Universe?

Truth meets an objection without dismay, and the advocates of revelation are neither intimidated by the mistaken meaning of a word, nor the misunderstanding of an argument. It is a moral maxim, the truth of which none will dispute, that the Author of Reason can never contradict Reason. Hence, if the scriptures did contain any instructions contradictory to enlightened Reason, this circumstance would sufficiently invalidate their heavenly claim. God is uniform in all his works; therefore, as he created Reason, and endowed her with all her perceptions and discriminating powers, the Scriptures originating from the same source, they must perfectly accord. The fact, however, is certain, that viewing the Scriptures with an unprejudiced eye, every mystery, and every miracle there recorded, will be found perfectly to harmonize with the deductions of Reason, and with the whole kingdom of Nature.

All existence is full of mystery. Mysterious is the nature of the Divine Being, and mysterious are all his works. Since the reign of mystery is universal, it would be a strong objection against revelation, if mystery did not extend her dominion over this region. In this manner, the objection of adversaries affords a strong argument in favour of revelation: for, if revelation was devoid of mystery, it would be destitute of one of the uniform characteristics of the works of God. Are the difficulties in the religion of Nature,

either fewer in number, or inferior in strength, to those of revelation? Can the boasted powers of a Deist, with the most vigorous exertion of his understanding, seize the idea of an eternal Being, who is without beginning or succession? Contemplating the immensity of God, mortals are overpowered with the idea of ONE who is not extended, yet present, in Heaven and in Earth, who is perfectly acquainted with the thoughts of every heart, and who "sees, with equal clearness, a kingdom "perish, and a sparrow fall." Reflecting upon his certain foreknowledge of the conduct of men, the freedom of action conferred upon them, and their responsibility to him, the mind is lost in amazement and wonder. Nor can the principles of Reason instruct mankind, how natural and moral evil were introduced into a world, formed by Him whose nature and perfections are unbounded goodness and divine benevolence.

The nature of man is likewise mysterious. Who can tell how the bones grow in the womb, and how they are nourished in their original dwelling? Who can describe the spiritual essence of the immortal mind, and the principles of its union to the material body? Nay, are not mysteries involved in every particle of matter, in every hair, and in every herb? Mystery pursues man through all the windings of human life. Numerous perplexities and mysteries occur in those things which concern our friends, our families, our property, our welfare, our health, our feelings, our reputation, nay, our very lives.

Nor say, where mystery begins religion ends; or, that a revealed mystery is an absurdity. The revelation of a thing may declare its existence, without illustrating its nature. A fact may be revealed, while its

nature, the causes which gave it birth, and many of the relative circumstances, are concealed. Countless instances of this kind are to be found, both in nature and common life. Yes, revealed mysteries are universally found in the works of Nature, and among the pages of revelation. Their utility is obvious. The one employs the powers, and checks the pride of the Philosopher; and the other proves the submission, and exercises the faith of the Christian. Who then will pretend to say, that reason is debased in acting respecting the mysteries of revelation, as she is constrained to do respecting the facts of Nature? Even to credit their existence, although she cannot understand their nature. "Canst thou, by searching, find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is high as Heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than Hell, what canst thou know? the measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea."

The character of the men who wrote these books, affords additional evidence.

The same mode of proof, which ascertains the genuine nature of any other book, will ascertain that of the Sacred Writings. In all such cases, the testimony of those who have been favoured with proper opportunities, to know the facts which they relate, is the only evidence required. The writers, in the different ages, when the Sacred writers flourished, have been consulted with great industry and zeal; and the result of these learned inquiries has been, that these books were universally received by the church, as the genuine productions of inspiration *. The Jews and Christians

* See Lardner's Credibility of the Gospel History, part II. Jones' new and full method of settling the Canonical authority of the New Testament.

had every motive to induce them to singular caution and minute investigation; and, as their united testimony would be sufficiently valid in any other case, it cannot be rejected in the present. The testimony of the Jews is farther confirmed by this circumstance, that our Lord never charged them with adulterating the Sacred Oracles, which had been entrusted to their care; and the uniform testimony of Christian writers, who either were cotemporaries, or flourished in the next ages, evince the genuine nature of the apostolic writings.

Admitting then, that these books were written by the men whose names they bear, it is proper to enquire, whether there is any reason to conclude, that, without supernatural aid, they could have produced them by the effusions of their own genius, or the mere exertion of their own natural powers? The maxim is universal, that the writings of every man indicate the imbecillity, or strength of his mind. That Moses, David, Solomon, Isaiah, and Paul, were men of exalted genius, and great learning, will readily be granted; but even their superior talents will not account for the excellence displayed in their compositions. The variety of sentiment, language, and genius, among the sacred writers, show that the Divine Spirit did no violence to their natural genius, but condescended to employ their different powers in his service. The Herdman of Tekoah, and the Fishermen of Gallilee, write in a manner different from these princes and men of science. Upon examination, however, it will be found, that all of them displayed intellectual exertions, transcending the ordinary and most vigorous efforts of the human mind.

It has already been found, that Moses, with all the learning of Egypt, could not, without Divine assistance, have given the information contained in his writings. The circumstances of the apostles were still more unfavourable. It is generally agreed, that the history of Matthew was written about eight years, and that of John about sixty years, after the ascension of Christ. How then could these men, unaided by Heaven, with such accuracy and precision, have remembered the transactions, miracles, sermons, and conversations, of their Lord? Unaccustomed to exercise their intellectual faculties, how could these simple and unlearned men have retailed his shorter discourses immediately after they were delivered, and much more those of greater length, after a period of so many years? Nor could these men, who were unacquainted with composition and arrangement, have given such a beautiful narrative. According to every estimation of the human powers, this fact can only be explained, by admitting that their memories were invigorated in a heavenly manner, to relate the doctrines and miracles of their Master.

LECTURE II.

The Inspiration of the Scriptures.

2 TIMOTHY iii. 16. *All Scripture was given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*

In the former Lecture, I entered upon the proof of the inspiration of the Scriptures, and then showed, that the gradual progress of revelation resembled the general progressive law, observable in all the works of God ; that the mysterious facts, the prophecies and their fulfilment, the doctrines, and the characters of the men who wrote these books, afforded full evidence of their divine authenticity.

Language is one of those marks by which the origin and identity of a people are discovered, and its utility, in the present argument, is obvious.

The elevation of sentiment, and the sublimity of style, displayed in many parts of Scripture, prove, that celestial energy invigorated the minds of the writers. Such is the weakness of the human mind, that often the loftiest subjects are debased by the meanness of sentiment, and the insipidity of language : therefore, the natives of a country, unacquainted with the literature and arts of the more polished nations of antiquity, could never have thought, or written with such majesty and

grandeur, unless they had been moved by the Holy Ghost. Casting the eye over the pages of revelation, we behold an extent and sublimity of conception, which throws into the shade the productions of the boldest and most comprehensive genius, either of ancient or modern times. It has been mentioned, that some of the sacred writers were selected from among the lowest ranks; yet the grand descriptions they give of the nature of God, the dependance of all Creation upon him, his uncontrouled power over universal nature, every element, and every event bending before him; all the revolutions of time tending to aid the general scheme of Redemption, and issuing in the glorious displays of infinite perfection, instantaneously recommend themselves to the mind, and by their magnificence, declare, that they have flowed from a higher source than fallen Reason. Hence the conclusion is natural, that a book containing such unequalled sentiment and language, must have emanated from the Fountain of all Perfection.

To prove the accuracy of these remarks, a few examples may be selected from the Sacred Writings. Listen to the sublime account of the creation of light, given by Moses: "God said, let there be light, and "there was light." Omnipotence speaks, and it is done. A heathen writer* has quoted this passage, as an example of the true sublime; and all the writers of antiquity could not afford him a similar example. How elevated the description given by David, of the descent and majestic operation of Jehovah, "† He bowed the "Heavens and came down, and darkness was under his

* Vide Longin. de Sublimitate, sect. xi.

† Psal. xviii. 9—15.

“ feet : and he rode upon a cherub, and did fly ; yea,
 “ he did fly upon the wings of the winds. He made
 “ darkness his secret place ; his pavilion round about
 “ him, were dark waters, and thick clouds of the skies.
 “ At the brightness that was before him, his thick
 “ clouds passed ; hail stones, and coals of fire. The
 “ Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest
 “ gave his voice ; hail stones, and coals of fire ; yea, he
 “ sent out his arrows, and scattered them ; and he shot
 “ out lightnings, and discomfited them. Then the chan-
 “ nels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the
 “ world were discovered at thy rebuke, O Lord, at the
 “ blast of the breath of thy nostrils.”

What can equal the description of Divine Power over the universe, given by the pen of Job? “ He is
 “ wise in heart, and mighty in strength. Who hath
 “ hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?
 “ Which removeth the mountains, and they know not ;
 “ which overturneth them in his anger ; which shak-
 “ eth the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof
 “ tremble ; which commandeth the sun, and it riseth
 “ not, and sealeth up the stars ; which alone spreadeth
 “ out the heavens, and tradeth upon the waves of the
 “ sea ; which maketh Acturus, Orion, and Pleiades,
 “ and the chambers of the south ; which doeth great
 “ things, past finding out ; yea, and wonders without
 “ number.*”

Not less sublime is the description of Divine Power, flowing from the pen of Isaiah : “ Who hath measured
 “ the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out
 “ heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust
 “ of the earth in a measure, and weighed the moun-

* Job ix. 4—10.

“ tains in scales, and the hills in a balance ? Who hath
 “ directed the Spirit of the Lord, or, being his coun-
 “ sellor, hath taught him ? With whom took he coun-
 “ sel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the
 “ path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and
 “ showed to him the way of understanding ? Behold the
 “ nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as
 “ the small dust of the balance ; behold he taketh up
 “ the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not
 “ sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient
 “ for a burnt-offering. All nations before him are as
 “ nothing ; and they are counted to him less than no-
 “ thing, and vanity. It is he that sitteth upon the cir-
 “ cle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as
 “ grasshoppers ; that stretcheth out the heavens as a
 “ curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell
 “ in ; that bringeth the princes to nothing ; he maketh
 “ the judges of the earth as vanity *.”

But among many examples which might have been quoted from the Old Testament writers, hear the simple, but majestic description, given by the Herdsman of Tekoah, “ For lo, he that formeth the mountains, and
 “ createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is
 “ his thought ; that maketh the morning darkness, and
 “ treadeth upon the high places of the earth. Seek him
 “ that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth
 “ the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh
 “ the day dark with night ; that calleth for the waters
 “ of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of
 “ the earth. The Lord, the God of Hosts, is his
 “ name.”†

* Isaiah xl. 12—17. and 22, 25.

† Amos iv. 13. and v. 8.

Although examples of the sublime are not so frequent in the New Testament, yet some might be produced, not less majestic than those now selected from the Old. But, to use the words of a judicious writer, to whom I acknowledge my obligations* : “ There are “ three descriptions of the Supreme Being, which, in a “ few simple words, convey more just and elevated “ ideas of him, than the most elaborate and splendid “ compositions of human genius and eloquence.” “ God “ is a Spirit.” “ God is Light.” “ God is Love.” “ In “ these short sentences, more is taught concerning him “ than Philosophy had ever learned ; more matter is “ compressed than was spread over the pages of all the “ wise men among the Gentiles. It is only necessary “ to peruse their writings, to be convinced that none of “ them ever entertained equally sublime conceptions of “ the spirituality, the purity, and the benevolence of the “ Deity.”

“ God is a Spirit.” The Father of Spirits, intimately acquainted with the nature, imperfections, frailties, wants, sorrows, agonies, and griefs, of the immortal soul. “ God is Light.” The author of all the material light which erradiates the universe ; the origin of all the knowledge and holiness which shines forth in the moral world. “ God is Love.” The origin and perfection of love in his nature, in his works, and especially in the mediation of salvation through the Son of his love.

Attending to the force of such accumulated evidence, who can avoid the inference, that the faculties of these men were elevated by a divine influence, that their sentiments were the dictates of heavenly wisdom, and

* Dick on Inspiration, page 175, 176.

that the appropriate words, in which these are expressed, were also suggested by the spirit of God? " Prophecy came not in old times by the will of men, but " holy men of God spake, as they were moved by the " Holy Ghost," in their sentiments, selections, arrangements, and language.

The simplicity of the style, as well as the sublimity of language, proves the heavenly origin of the Scriptures.

The powers of the mind usually participate of the nature of the subjects which occupy their attention. If low, they are depressed; if high, they are elevated. Style also corresponds to the general tone of the mind. The subjects which employed the minds of the sacred writers, were the most interesting and sublime; yet they never attempt the use of pompous declamation, either to exaggerate or to magnify. The simple narrative of facts is left to make its own impression. In describing the unequalled work of creation, Moses aims at no embellishment, but simply relates the facts. The same style is used in recording the different remarkable events, deliverances, and revolutions, during the whole period of his history. A greater latitude is indeed due to poetical and prophetic writers; but this remark applies to all the historians, especially to the evangelists.

The most astonishing facts pass under their pens. The miraculous conception and birth of Jesus; the favours he conferred, and the miracles he performed; his raising the dead, and expelling the devils; his healing the sick, and curing all manner of diseases; his walking on the sea, and calming the fury of the waves; the darkening of the sun; the rending of the rocks;

the opening of the graves ; his own resurrection and ascension, are subjects naturally calculated to raise the style of the writers to the highest tone of elevation. It is singularly remarkable, however, that no such elevation appears. Since, therefore, this is contrary to the operations of the mind, in similar circumstances, it can only be explained by this consideration, that they were under the direction of the Divine Spirit, who chose that “ revelation should not stand in the wisdom of “ man, but in the power of God ;” that our faith in Christ should depend upon the simple statement of the facts which proved his divine mission, and not upon the embellishments of eloquence, or the efforts of superior address.

The miracles wrought by the sacred writers, afford another argument.

A miracle is a work either superior or contrary to the laws of nature, which God only can perform, or some person, by power derived from him, for some important purpose, either to attest the dignity of his character, or the heavenly nature of his doctrine. Of this kind were the miracles wrought by Moses, Elijah, and his successor ; and also by our Lord and his apostles. The miracles wrought by Moses, attested the divinity of his commission, displayed the superiority of the true God to the gods of the surrounding nations, and produced a most beneficial change in the circumstances of the Jewish nation. The miracles of Elijah and Elisha were demonstrative proofs of the Divine power, and infinite superiority of Jehovah to the idolatrous idols of Ahab, and convincing evidences that the Lord had sent these two great men to denounce his judgments, and to reclaim that rebellious people.

The miracles wrought by Jesus and his Apostles, proved the divinity of their mission, and the heavenly nature of their doctrine, but the change which these miracles produced is singularly attractive. The apostles, by the power of miracles, changed the general state of the moral world, and in opposition to the strongest prejudices of the Jews, and the long rivetted superstition of the Gentiles, converted them to the faith of the Gospel. These miracles were the seals of Heaven annexed to their commission, and also the instruments in their hands by which they were rendered “mighty “through God, to the destruction of the strong holds “of Sin and Satan.” Miraculous power is the only principle which can explain the extensive and moral fact, and the only cause which could have produced such an effect. For, to admit the existence of the effect, without admitting that it was the result of miraculous power, would be to acknowledge the greatest of all miracles.

Nor is it consistent with the wisdom of God, to suppose that he would have conferred the power of working miracles, unless to promote some important end worthy of himself, and correspondent to his divine perfections. Perfect wisdom is displayed in all his works, and so likewise in this part of the divine administration, “He will not give his glory to another;” therefore, when he conferred the power of working miracles, it was certainly for the manifestation of his own glory.

The exact agreement of the sacred writers affords another proof.

During the lapse of a few ages, every human system, whether political or moral, undergoes various revolutions. New discoveries, changes of climate and

manners, give birth to new opinions, manners, and customs. Numerous facts, in the history of human affairs, authenticate the accuracy of this remark. Change is engraven on every human production. But change is unknown with the sacred writings, and the same radical articles remain invariable. By these writings the Christian is taught to adore the same God, to trust in the same Mediator, to obey the same precepts, and to hope for the same immortality, as Abel, Enoch, Noah, or Abraham, or any of the faithful of ancient days. Though a long period elapsed between Moses and John, yet they perfectly accord, “ Moses truly said unto the “ Fathers, a Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up “ unto you, of your brethren, like unto me, him shall “ ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto “ you.”—And John describes Jesus as “ he who was “ called faithful and true, who judgeth in righteousness, “ whose name is the Word of God, and who is “ the faithful and true witness.”

The sacred writers flourished in different periods, in different stages of refinement. They were selected from among the different ranks of society; they were different in their mental qualities, in their opportunities of improvement, in their modes of life, and in their plans of education; yet the most exact and universal harmony prevails among their writings. The descriptions given by the prophets, of the nature and government of God, of the nature and guilt of man, of the descent, dignity, humiliation, sufferings, and glory of Christ, exactly correspond with those related by the Evangelists. Nor do the views of morality, given by the New Testament writers, differ in the least from the Old, unless in their precision and strength. Such

harmony could not proceed from a human, but a divine source. And any seeming contradictions are easily reconciled, and the principles of candid criticism clearly evince, that these neither militate against the harmony, nor affect the divinity of the Sacred Oracles. Nay, they afford an argument in favour of inspiration, since they prove that no collusion subsisted among the different writers.

The preserving care of heaven also declares those books to be divine.

The sacred books of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and other nations, together with the revered leaves of the Roman Sibyl, have all perished in the wreck of time; but the sacred books of the Jews and Christians have remained in all their original perfection, during the long period of five thousand years. Some books have been favoured with long life, but against these no arm of violence has been raised: but the malevolent hands of superstition, and idolatry, and profligacy, and persecution, have all been lifted up against the Scriptures, to blot out their remembrance from the earth. During the days of ancient idolatry, in the land of Israel, how often were Moses and the prophets neglected to be read in the synagogue? How often has the whole record of truth, by different edicts, been devoted to the flames? yet still the heathen have raged in vain, and the kings of the earth have taken counsel to none effect. The productions of the Holy Ghost, independent of all their severe conflicts with the powers of darkness, the corruptions of humanity, and the pride and error of men, still live and flourish in all the blooming strength of celestial youth. Nor is their energy now diminished, in testifying against the existence of error, the encou-

ragement of vice, and the seductions of Satan. What cause can be assigned for such facts? None but one: That it is the good pleasure of the Holy Spirit to preserve and maintain his own inspired Writings, to be the instrument, in his hand, to perform that part of the glorious work of salvation, appropriated to him in the arrangement of eternity.

To close the proof of this important article, it is now added, that the wonders which have been, and are still performed by this book, afford a continued and increasing proof of its heavenly origin.

Behold what the Scriptures have done in the days of Moses! What struggles, and what victories over the stiff-necked and rebellious race! Behold the advantages the successor of Moses reaped from meditating in the law of the Lord day and night! What were the exquisite pleasures experienced by the man who said, “thy “word is a light unto my feet, and a lamp unto my “path? And who, in all the holy fervour of his pious soul, cried, “Lord open mine eyes, that I may behold “wondrous things out of thy law?” What was the comfort to himself, and the utility to his nation, experienced by Daniel, when he “understood by this “book, the time determined upon his people and his “holy city?” What direction and encouragement did the unlearned disciples experience, from beholding the exact accomplishment of the predictions which went before, concerning the effects which their labours were to produce in the world, and the glory that should follow?

Stay not and wonder here; fly along the region of gospel-operation, and see what mighty works were performed by the Sacred Oracles. Lo! they reach a quar-

ter of the globe where the darkness of ignorance and superstition reign in all their strength and horror ; they have no sooner entered, than ignorance becomes the light of salvation, and superstition the rational worship of the living God. The divine institutions of salvation, succeed the abominations of destruction. The Scriptures are read, the gospel is preached, the ordinances dispensed ; and, lo ! multitudes of the guilty approach ; they are directed for pardon to Jesus, who was exalted “ to give repentance and the remission of sins.” The impure and abandoned are directed to the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness, and to the blood of Jesus, which was shed both for the atonement and cleaning of the nations. The avaricious are constrained “ to set their affections on things above ; to “ lay up treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor “ rust doth corrupt, nor thieves break through to “ steal.” The turbulent, passionate man, who scattered wretchedness and sorrow all around, is made to feel the force of divine truth ; the tumult subsides, and his passions are subdued ; the lion becomes a lamb. Behold, through the word of the Holy Ghost, and his blessing upon that word, the drunkard rendered sober ; the fraudulent honest ; the liar taught to speak the truth ; the cruel to become merciful ; the giddy to be thoughtful ; the prayerless to bend in humble supplication ; and the vain-glorious, by conscientious virtue, to prefer the solid approbation of their Maker to the fleeting applause of men.

Behold their energy in the days of the apostles ; their continued energy in every occurring period ; and the uniform effects they produce upon every nation, however rude and barbarous ; upon every community, how-

ever debased and profligate ; upon every society, however corrupt and fraudulent ; and upon every individual, however abandoned and vile ; and no cause can be assigned for these changes but the following, even that “ all scripture was given by inspiration of God, “ and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness : that the law “ of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul ; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. “ For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and “ sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to “ the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the “ joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts “ and intents of the heart.”

Ye highly-favoured ones, who have found the divine writings the seeds of conversation, and who now find them the nourishment of your spiritual life and your consolation, in the house of your pilgrimage, raise your songs of gratitude to the Divine Spirit, who has condescended to confer this heavenly treasure. Honour him, by bringing forth the peachable fruits of righteousness ; and continue to increase with all the increase of God. Let not your unbelief “ grieve the Spirit by “ whom ye are sealed unto the day of redemption,” but establish your hearts, in the full assurance that he who, by means of his own word, “ has begun a good “ work in you, will carry it on until the day of Christ.”

Ye young men, “ by what means shall ye cleanse “ your way,” and rise superior to natural depravity, to contaminating example, to infatuating seduction, and to all the adversaries of virtue ? By imitating the conduct of Joshua, the young general, who meditated in the law of the Lord day and night. By regulating

your sentiments and conversation by this heavenly book: it will prove the best fortifier of every honourable principle, the wisest guide of inexperience, the strongest defence against temptation, the most powerful enemy to the impetuosity of passion, and your highest honour in the evening of life.

Ye who are engaged in the busy active scene, and who are encumbered with numerous perplexing cares, let the Word of God dwell in you richly, and it will prove the most faithful guide in perplexity, and the best preparative to the honourable performance of duty. It will teach parents and children, masters and servants, princes and subjects, how to conduct themselves in their respective stations, both to the glory of God, and to their own comfort.

Ye children of sorrow, who are groaning under the various calamities and bereavements incident to sinful humanity, have daily recourse to this Sacred Counsellor, who will prove the best enlivener of the hours of mournful solitude, and will guide, animate, and comfort you, during all the dark and thorny path of life, and conduct you in safety to the mansions of eternal joy.

LECTURE III.

The Truth of Christianity.

MARK i. 14. 15. “Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus
“came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of
“God, and saying: The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of
“God is at hand, repent ye, and believe the Gospel.

THE Christian religion is the final and most illustrious display of Divine benevolence. Educated under her salutary influence, and regulated by her instructions in our moral sentiments, our religious homage, our present conduct, and our future expectations, it is of the utmost importance to ascertain her reality and divine authority.

Entering upon the proof of the celestial origin of Christianity, it may be necessary to examine, whether the circumstances of mankind *then* required a divine interposition.

The power of God only operates by supernatural means, when the natural are insufficient. Hence, if the general conduct and opinions of mankind, at the introduction of Christianity, did not require a Divine interference, it would afford a strong presumption against the truth of the Christian system. A number of melancholy facts, however, evince that the honour of God, and the moral interest of his offspring, then called for a new display of mercy. In the days of Noah,

decayed virtue constrained Divine vengeance to descend, in order to interrupt the universal depravity of the Antedeluvian world. A few ages only elapsed, when the earth was again filled with violence, clouded with ignorance, and sunk in superstition. Providence, however, approached at this mournful era, to retard the triumphs of profanity and vice. Selecting Abraham from among his heathen countrymen, he miraculously changed his moral character, raised him superior to the prejudices of education, the effects of custom, and the baneful influence of superstition, and honoured him to be the father and founder of the Jewish church. The increasing profligacy of the Canaanites, drew down the desolating judgments of God ; affording an instructive admonition to the surrounding nations. The education of the Jews in Egypt, had shaded their national character with a deep tincture of superstition, but to check its progress, and to impress their minds with a sense of the grandeur and Divine power of God, he descended upon Mount Sinai, and with all the ensigns of awful Majesty, republished the Moral Law. Still farther to eradicate the superstitious abominations of Egypt, a new system of religious worship was enjoined, tending to inspire them with a reverential awe of the God of Israel, with a strong sense of his goodness, and of their absolute dependance upon him ; and whilst it was calculated to engage their attention, it in some measure gratified their imaginations. The rough and superstitious character of that nation required such a religion, as had for its observances, a tabernacle and temple, rites and ceremonies, divers washings and purifyings.

Hence, it may be asked, was not that system ordained

by God, and did it not teach salvation through faith in the promised Messiah? Why then might not the same system have remained, and, in an improved state, become the general religion of mankind? There is, however, an essential difference between what is possible, and what is agreeable to God; between what he may do, and what is consistent with the general plan of his government. Although he is unlimited in his perfections, yet certain determinate laws appear to regulate all his proceedings. Correspondent to these laws, many facts in the history of mankind, at the time of the introduction of Christianity, clearly indicate the necessity of a new manifestation of grace. The gradual improvement of mankind appears to constitute one of the general laws of the Divine Government. The Jews accordingly received a religious system, corresponding to their degree of civilization and refinement; but the cultivated state of society now required a moral economy, more calculated to carry forward that improvement to the zenith of perfection.

The peculiar kindness of God was in former ages confined to that nation: hence a local, partial, and temporary system was enjoined, suitable to their circumstances, and to the designs of Providence. In many of the essential parts of that institution, the necessity of one, more spiritual and extensive, was obvious. The mercy of God must *either have* remained confined to that nation, or mankind must have received a mode of worshipping, adapted to their situation and circumstances.

The political state of the inhabitants of the globe, when Jesus came preaching the gospel of the kingdom, farther indicated their prepared situation to receive a

new display of Divine benevolence. The gradual improvement of the human mind, and her exertion in arts, science, and commerce, had then united the common interests of mankind. The Romans, a brave, martial, and enterprising people, proved either the original cause, or the eminent means of this union. Their ambitious spirit formed the bold design of conquering the world ; and their superiority afforded them the means ; so that in a short time they united, in one empire, all the surrounding tribes. The consequences were, that under the eye of a vigilant government, the mutual hostilities of warlike tribes were quashed, subjects were taught to cultivate peace, and to acquire riches ; and the general communication being rendered easy and secure, the beneficial schemes for meliorating the barbarous condition of mankind, soon rose to considerable perfection. Hence Roman ambition paved the way for the introduction of Christian knowledge.

As the way of the Lord was now prepared, so the general depravity of the world required his gracious interference. The Jews, from their education in Egypt, the example of other nations, the influence of climate, and their own perverse dispositions, were justly entitled to the appellation of a “ stubborn, stiff-necked, and “ rebellious people.” At the time of our Lord’s appearing, several circumstances conspired to foster this natural perverseness. From the days of Malachi, to those of the Forerunner of Christ, there had been no prophecy nor heavenly manifestation, no righteous judge nor exalted leader, to preserve virtue and protect innocence. The natural consequences were, a contempt of religion, and a neglect of its ordinances ; a degradation of character, and a degeneracy of manners.

Disregarding those precepts which improve the heart, they added vain traditions to the ceremonies of Moses, and instituted frivolous and insignificant observances in place of "the weightier matters of the law, Judgment, Mercy, and Faith." During this decline of morals, Jesus appeared, to repair the ruins of many generations, and to preach the doctrine of repentance, and the forgiveness of sin.

The deplorable state of heathen virtue called still more loudly for the introduction of Christianity. The heathen deities were infamous for every enormity and vice; and their religious rites were composed of the vilest abominations: what then was to be expected from their worshippers? Just conceptions of the Divine Being, obedience to his laws, purity of heart, and sanctity of manners, were unknown in their religious system. Such was the state of the world at that period, strongly evincing the necessity of a new interposition, to interrupt the progress of degeneracy, and to preserve the knowledge, worship, and service of God among men. If it was necessary to approach to the aid of religion in the days of Abraham and of Moses, much stronger necessity now called for the revelation of the mystery of salvation. The fulfilment of the ancient predictions, and the realizing the general expectation which then prevailed, of a Deliverer to mankind, added to the general necessity: hence the moral state of the world, at the time of the giving of the Christian law, affords sufficiently strong and urgent reasons, that God should arise and vindicate his own cause, "and make the idols of the nations tremble at his presence."

Having found a necessity existing, which required a divine interposition, the reality of the Christian system is now to be substantiated. But did this system instantaneously eradicate the nations, or was its approach gradual, and the intimation of its coming of ancient date? Former manifestations were both the forerunners and the heralds of this enlarged system. The sacrifices in Adam's family, in the Antedeluvian world, the intimations to Noah, the promises to Abraham, the sacrifices, the ceremonies, the divers washings and purifyings under the law of Moses, together with the countless prophecies concerning Christ, all predicted a more perfect manifestation yet to come. Hence, that gradual unfolding, bespeaks this work to rank among the number of those which fall under the general progressive law of Heaven.

The direct proof of the truth of Christianity is to be drawn from the Sacred Writings. In this early stage of our progress, we find the advantage of the general arrangement; for, having already found the most satisfactory evidence, concerning the inspiration of the Scriptures, it is only necessary that we now consult these writings; and, if the appointment of Christianity is there revealed, the proof of its divine original is closed. In these writings, there is sufficient historical proof concerning the Author, the appointment, the nature, and the tendency, of this system. There we are informed, that in the days of Herod, who governed Judea as a Roman province under the Emperor Tiberius, a child was born, whose birth was marked with circumstances that attracted general attention. Guided by a supernatural sign, three wise men repaired to Jerusalem to honour this remarkable child. In conse-

quence of a decree of the Emperor, all the inhabitants of Judea were ordered to repair each to their paternal city, there to be taxed. Among others, the mother of the infant repaired to Bethlehem, the place of her nativity. Hither the wise men are directed; and, after paying divine homage to the Child, obtained an interview with Herod, to whom they disclose the reasons which induced them to visit the land of Judea. Their narrative awakened the basest passions of his mind. Impelled by cruel jealousy, he thirsted for the blood of the Child: Heaven, however, interfered in his preservation, and, by Divine direction, he was carried into Egypt, where he remained in safety during the reign of that cruel prince. Herod, disappointed in his intention, slew all the males in Bethlehem, "from two "years old and under." This circumstance was naturally calculated to attract the attention of the Jewish nation, of the Roman government, and of the adjacent countries, towards that Child.

These writings farther mention, that, by the immediate revelation of God, this Child was "called JESUS, "because he was to save his people from their sins." That Jesus remained in obscurity until he was about thirty years of age, labouring as a carpenter, and enjoying none of the advantages of a liberal education. That at this time, John the Baptist was teaching a new mode of religious worship, and expressly informing his countrymen, that he was the fore-runner of the promised Messiah. That Jesus, among others, came to attend upon the ministry of John, and to receive the ordinance of baptism, the external sign of this new religion, to be established by the coming Messiah. But lo! when Jesus appeared, John was divinely informed

that this was the promised Messiah ; and heaven also gave open testimony to the reality of his character.

We are afterwards informed, that this Jewish peasant, who had lived in a sequestered part of the country, destitute of education, unfavoured with the means of polishing his manners, and refining his taste, and unacquainted with any writings, except those of Moses and the prophets, appeared in the character of a public teacher. Unpossessed of the means necessary in such undertakings, he selected a few fishermen, who dwelt upon the lake of Tiberias, whose circumstances were equally unfavourable. With these unprotected, uneducated, and simple men, he commenced the glorious design of overturning the religious system of his countrymen, and of the whole world. His historians also relate, that, similar to his fore-runner, he began with preaching the doctrine of Repentance, severely reprobating the vices of the Jews, and teaching a system of morals and duties, unequalled either for utility or extent, containing rules to regulate public, domestic, and private conduct, nay, the secret emotions and thoughts of the heart.

During his residence on earth, he took upon himself the active part of this laborious work ; and only on one occasion sent his disciples forth to preach in the villages. They farther inform us, that although the sacerdotal and political orders would not receive him as their Messiah promised unto the fathers, yet his instructions were received with applause, and his ministry attended by multitudes. That, in order to remove their prejudices, and to eradicate their unbelief, he wrought many miracles, and appealed to these as proofs of his divine character and benevolent mission. That, in his

public teaching, he appealed to the prophecies which had been given concerning the Messiah, and showed their exact accomplishment in himself. That, in an unequalled manner, he adapted his instructions to the capacity of his hearers, and, on several occasions, gave them decisive proofs of his perfect acquaintance with the thoughts and intents of the heart.

His historians farther mention, that after enduring the insults of the vulgar, the virulent reproaches of the powerful, after a life of unstained purity and unbounded benevolence, he was betrayed by one of his disciples into the hands of the Jews, and, after a mock trial, delivered over to the Roman governor, to receive the sentence of crucifixion. That, previous to his death, he appointed the ordinance of the Lord's Supper in place of that of the Passover ; informed his disciples of the approaching event, and consoled their minds in the view of the loss they were about to sustain. That, in the hour of his sufferings, the temple was unvailed, the rocks shook and burst asunder, the sun was darkened, and the graves yielded up their dead,--all proclaiming to mortals the nature of the great event. That, having by his death accomplished the atonement of the world, he was laid in a new sepulchre, a stone rolled upon it, a seal affixed, and a Roman watch placed, lest his disciples, according to the apprehensions of the Jews, should remove his body, and pretend that he was risen from the dead. That, agreeable to his own prediction, the third day had scarcely dawned, when " he declared " himself to be the Son of God, by his resurrection from " the dead." That, risen from the dead, he revisited his disconsolate disciples, instructed them more fully concerning the nature of his kingdom, appointed the

ordinance of baptism, as the initiating sign of the Christian church, commissioned his apostles to teach the nations ; and that, thus having founded the gospel church, appointed the ordinances, directed the worship, revealed the doctrines, and enjoined the precepts thereof, in the presence of his disciples, he ascended up into heaven, while he was pouring out his divine blessing upon them, and left them to carry on the work which he had so gloriously begun. Such is the account which the inspired historians give of the Author, nature, and introduction of the Christian religion.

Convinced of the divine inspiration of these writings, the mind must rest satisfied concerning the reality and existence of these facts, because they are recorded by them. Inspiration preserves from every species of error. These facts were recorded by inspiration : therefore, the system of religion instituted by Jesus Christ was of divine authority. If, however, it may not be deemed lessening the evidence, to go from the greater to the less, it might be added, that the same facts are authenticated by the testimony of other writers who lived in this period.

In the tenth year of Nero's reign, the Roman capital was set on fire, and the greater part of the city consumed ; and the remaining part “ displayed a melancholy prospect of ruin and desolation. The voice of rumour accused the emperor as the incendiary of his own capital ; and as the most incredible stories are the best adopted to the genius of an enraged people ; it was gravely reported, and firmly believed, that Nero, enjoying the calamity which he had occasioned, amused himself with singing to his lyre, the destruction of ancient Troy. To divert a suspicion, which

“ the power of despotism was unable to suppress, the
“ emperor resolved to substitute, in his own place, some
“ fictitious criminals. With this view,” (adds Tacitus)
“ he inflicted the most exquisite tortures on those men
“ who, under the vulgar appellation of Christians, were
“ already branded with deserved infamy. They derived
“ their name and origin from Christ, who, in the reign
“ of Tiberius, suffered death by the sentence of the pro-
“ curator Pontius Pilate. For a while this dire supersti-
“ tion was checked; but it again burst forth, and not
“ only spread itself over Judea, the first seat of this
“ mischievous sect, but was even introduced into Rome,
“ the common asylum, which receives and protects
“ whatever is impure, whatever is atrocious. The con-
“ fessions of those who were seized, discovered a great
“ multitude of their accomplices; and they were all
“ convicted, not so much for the crime of setting fire
“ to the city, as for their hatred of human kind. They
“ died in torments; and their torments were embittered
“ by insult and derision. Some were nailed on crosses;
“ others sewn up in the skins of wild beasts, and ex-
“ posed to the fury of dogs: others again, smeared over
“ with combustible materials, were used as torches to
“ illuminate the darkness of the night. The gardens of
“ Nero were destined for the melancholy spectacle,
“ which was accompanied with a horse race, and ho-
“ noured with the presence of the emperor, who min-
“ gled with the populace, in the dress and attitude of a
“ charioteer. The guilt of the Christians deserved in-
“ deed the most exemplary punishment; but the public
“ abhorrence was changed into commiseration, from the
“ opinion, that those unhappy wretches were sacrificed,

“ not so much to the public welfare, as to the cruelty
“ of a jealous tyrant.”

Suetonius, a writer cotemporary with Tacitus, describing the transactions of the same reign, uses these words: “ The Christians, a sect of men of a new and “ mischievous superstition, were punished.”

The younger Pliny, who was cotemporary with Tacitus and Suetonius, speaking of the Christians in Bythynia and Pontus, has these words: “ There are “ many of every age, and of both sexes, nor has the “ contagion of this superstition seized cities only, but “ smaller towns also, and the open country ;” and he adds, “ that accusations, trials, and examinations, were, “ and had been going on against them in the provinces over which he presided ; that schedules were “ delivered by anonymous informers, containing the “ names of persons who were suspected of holding, or “ of favouring that religion : that in consequence of “ these informations, many had been apprehended, of “ whom some boldly avowed their profession, and died “ in the cause.”

The evidence of these three heathen historians sufficiently proves, that Christ appeared as a public teacher in the land of Judea, at the time mentioned by the sacred historians ; that he was the founder of the sect called Christians ; that they were numerous, not only in the different Roman provinces, but also in Rome herself ; and that Christ suffered death under the government of Pontius Pilate. They farther prove, that the religious system which he introduced, was grossly misrepresented and calumniated, his followers maltreated and persecuted, exposed to the greatest hardships

and the severest cruelties ; yet still they continued steadfast in the profession of their faith.

It is now added, that, independent of their inspiration, the men who wrote the history of Christ, were placed in such circumstances as perfectly qualified them to give an accurate and faithful narrative. Matthew, the author of the first, was an original apostle, and a professor of that religion. The author of the second was an inhabitant of Jerusalem, at whose house the apostles usually assembled. The author of the third was a companion and fellow-traveller of Paul, one of the most learned and active of all the apostles. The author of the fourth was an apostle, and peculiar favourite of his Master. Can stronger evidence arise from the local situation of any historian than what is here afforded ? These men lived on the very spot, and at the time in which the things they relate came to pass. Two of them wrote from personal knowledge, and were witnesses of the events, and heard the discourses which they record. They were not only deeply interested in the facts of their history, but also published them to that generation, who, like themselves, were witnesses of the things related. The other two either wrote from authentic information, or from an accurate examination of written materials. Hence, the local advantages of these historians were the most favourable, both to perfect accuracy and ample detail.

The facts related by the Evangelists are also corroborated by a series of letters, tending greatly to illustrate the historical narrative. In these letters, constant references are made to the Evangelical writings, principles are deduced, consolations are drawn, and threat-

nings suggested. Nay, upon examination, it will be found, that the Evangelists afford materials to all the rest of the New Testament writers. These occupy a central station, where all the lines of sacred history are concentrated. They lead the mind to consult the Old Testament pages, to mark the prophecies there contained, and to attend to their fulfilment; and it will also be found, that they still afforded ample materials for occupying the pens of succeeding writers. Such is the relative station and vast importance of the Evangelical histories.

LECTURE IV.

The Truth of Christianity.

JOHN iii. 2. “ Nicodemus said unto Jesus, Rabbi, we know that thou art a Teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.”

IN the first step of proof, it has been found, that to prevent total degeneracy, the circumstances both of Jews and Gentiles required a supernatural manifestation. In the second step of the proof, the historical evidence contained in the sacred writings, concerning the appointment of Christianity, was presented to the view of the reader; and also the evidence afforded by heathen writers, in support of the same facts. And in the conclusion, it was mentioned, that the men who wrote the history of Christianity, were placed in such circumstances as perfectly qualified them to give an accurate and faithful narrative; hence the evidence, both of sacred and heathen historians, unite to establish the veracity of the heavenly system.

Imitating the mode of proof adopted by our Lord himself, let us next consider the miracles which he wrought to prove the truth of Christianity.

“ The works which my Father gave me to do, the same bear witness of me.” And again he says unto the Jews, “ If I do not the works of my Father, believe

“ me not.” It has been found, that miracles attested the inspiration of the Scriptures ; and with equal force they prove the truth of Christianity. When an ambassador appears at a foreign court, upon his first audience, he produces his credentials : so Jesus, when he came from Heaven, to introduce the kingdom of God among men, he, upon his first appearance, produced miracles, as his credentials from the court of Heaven. Nor is it required of an ambassador, that he should produce his credentials every time that he appears at the foreign court ; it is sufficient that he did so upon his first arrival ; so it is not necessary that miracles should be continued, because, the heavenly origin of Christianity being once established by their evidence, their existence becomes unnecessary. Nay, the circumstance of their continuance would change their quality ; and from their repetition, they would cease to be miracles, and rank among the common operations of Nature.

In order to invalidate the miracles of the New Testament, a celebrated writer has strenuously laboured to disprove the existence of miracles altogether. The substance of his argument is, “ that it is contrary to “ experience, that a miracle should be true, but not “ contrary to experience, that a testimony should be “ false.”

In the deduction of evidence, it is an established maxim, that if an argument proves too much, it is not applicable to the subject to which it is applied ; therefore it ought to be rejected. Such is the fact with regard to Mr Hume’s argument. For if men are to reject every relation which is not supported by the testimony of their own experience, then the man who never visited a foreign country must deny the existence

of any other except his own native country, because he has not the testimony of experience that any such does exist. He also, who resides in this quarter of the globe, must deny, that under the north and south poles there is only one day and one night during the whole year; because this is not only contrary to any thing which he has experienced, but he actually experiences the very reverse; there being, in this quarter of the globe, no fewer than three hundred and sixty-five days in every year. In this case, there are three hundred and sixty-five experiences against one testimony; yet they do not invalidate its force. Upon the principle of Mr Hume, the unlearned peasant must likewise treat with contempt the information of philosophers concerning the round form of the earth, its daily and annual motion round the sun, because they are in appearance contrary to his experience. Nay, according to his doctrine, the discoveries of science would become useless, and the mistakes of uninformed men would be substituted in their place.

Farther, the relation of a fact is only contrary to experience, when the fact is asserted to have happened at a certain period of time, and in a certain place; at which time, and in which place, a person being present in the full exercise of all his senses and faculties, did not perceive it either to happen or to exist. This is contrary to experience; and no evidence whatever can surmount it. But this writer seems, by the phrase “contrary to experience,” to mean, not the experience of a few, but the general experience of mankind. Such being the meaning of his words, there will arise no small difficulty in accurately ascertaining where the particular experience which is objectionable terminates,

and that which he acknowledges, begins; how many instances are necessary to constitute a particular, and how many to constitute a general, experience: and, upon the supposition that miracles were necessary to decide the authority, and to prove the heavenly origin of Christianity, how many miracles were necessary to compose a particular, and how many to compose a general, experience. Such a vague use of language may tend to darken or deceive, but can never tend to instruct, or convey any determinate ideas to mankind.

The objection from experience farther supposes, either that the course of nature is perfectly invariable, or that, when once varied, these variations must become so frequent as to be matter of general experience, or their existence must be totally denied. Nor are miracles without experience of their own nature and kind. God has frequently wrought miracles; therefore mankind have been favoured with the general experience of his working miracles. The miracles performed to prove the truth of Christianity were not solitary displays of divine power. Nor is the objection valid, that, in the history of miracles, *effects* are represented as existing without adequate *causes*, or ascribed to causes whose operation is unknown to experience. To what causes, I ask, is the reference made? If it is answered, that the advocates for miracles ascribe the cure of the palsy to a touch with the finger, the removal of blindness to the anointing of the eyes with clay, the healing of the sick, or the raising of the dead, to the speaking a word or uttering a sentence; they positively deny any such inference. It is not to *these* causes they ascribe *those* effects. The cause of these effects they acknowledge to be the agency, volition,

and power of God. This is the adequate cause which produced these miraculous effects. The reality of miracles are not improbable to the man who believes in the existence and power of God to perform them. Nay, more; why should not the reality of a miracle be received by us, upon the testimony of a sufficient number of competent witnesses, although we ourselves were not present when the miracle was performed?

Contemplating the nature of Christ's miracles, they will appear genuine and undeniable, and all of a benevolent nature, corresponding to his gracious doctrine, and the merciful design of his coming into the world. They were frequently repeated before a whole nation of enemies, who were always eager to detect fraud or collusion, if any such existed in the conduct of him who was " holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from " sinners." Turn to the pages of Christ's history, and let these miracles vindicate their own cause. Behold him honouring innocent festivity with his presence; and, by a simple act of his will, turning water into wine, at the marriage of Cana of Galilee. Informed that the wine was exhausted, he said, " Fill the water-pots with " water." They obey. He again desires them " to pour " out, and bear unto the governor of the feast;" and lo ! the water was become wine.

Repair to the barren desert, and behold thousands sitting in anxious expectation to receive his bounty. A few small loaves, and a few small fishes, are produced; and, by a secret exertion of his power, these are increased in the using; so that not only were thousands amply satisfied, but as many baskets of fragments left as there were of loaves at first. Could the keen sen-

sations of hunger which preyed upon these thousands be removed by intrigue or deception? Could the senses and perceptions of so many persons be imposed upon in such a matter? Were not a competent number of witnesses present, and favoured with proper means of ascertaining the nature of the miracle?

Next visit the mournful dwelling of the nobleman of Galilee, and behold his only son agonizing under a violent disease. The father hastens to Jesus, and earnestly supplicates for the life of his child. Jesus speaks, and it is done: the house of mourning becomes the mansion of joy.

Trace the footsteps of the “man of sorrow, and acquainted with griefs,” until he arrives at “the pool of Bethesda, where lay a multitude of blind, halt, and maimed, waiting” for the descending of the angel to infuse healing virtue into the waters. Here he casts the eye of compassion towards a poor old man; and, by a powerful word of mercy, restores him to health.

Follow him through the after-stages of his life; and here you shall behold him curing a leper; there giving sight to the blind; at this place casting out devils; and at that place raising the dead. But the miracle of miracles remains yet to be mentioned. Repair to the grave of Jesus, and there behold him “declaring himself to be the Son of God, with power, by his own resurrection from the dead.” By a power derived from God, some men have raised others from the dead; but when was it heard, that any man ever raised himself from the dead? To the Son of God this honour was reserved, in order to demonstrate the validity of his mission, and his eternal power and Godhead. Take

an united view of these miracles, and then say, if they do not afford the most convincing evidence of the divine character of Jesus, and the heavenly origin of Christianity. Who can now refrain from assenting to the declaration of Nicodemus? "We know thou art a "teacher come from God, for no man can do those "miracles which thou dost, except God be with him."

Nor were these miracles sudden and momentary, so that they could not be examined with any degree of minuteness. No: here is the leper; let the chief priest himself examine whether or not he is now cleansed. Here is the blind man; examine whether or not he now seeth. Here are Lazarus and the widow of Nain's son; they were once dead, but now they are alive, and let them speak for themselves. Nay, the Son of God himself, who "was dead, and behold he is alive "for evermore, Amen, and has the keys of hell and "of death." By residing among his apostles for a short time, he gave the fullest evidence of his resurrection; and his disciples saw him ascend to heaven, where he is now seated at the right hand of the Father, carrying forward, to full maturity, the manifestation of mercy. "If any man sin, we have our advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Certainly these different displays of divine power afford ample proof of the truth of Christianity.

His historians farther inform us, that Jesus was also endowed with the spirit of prophecy. As the power of God only can work miracles, so the knowledge of future events is known to him alone. Numerous predictions are contained in the ancient records, concerning the time, the place, and the circumstances, of Christ's birth; the tribe, the family, and the person,

from whom he should descend ; the general tenor of his life, the virtues he should exhibit, the place where he should chiefly reside, and also the miracles he should perform : all of which had their exact accomplishment in him. But Jesus also gave full proof that he himself was endowed with the spirit of prophecy.

Review the pages of his history, and there you will find him foretelling the base treachery of Judas, the criminal denial of Peter, and the shameful desertion of his disciples ; the destruction of the capital of Judea, the manner of his death, his resurrection, the rapid progress of the gospel, and the final victory of truth over error. The exact accomplishment of all these, and even the greater part of them during that very age in which Christ lived, ascertains, in the most convincing manner, the heavenly nature of Christianity.

The sublime doctrines which he taught, and the pure morality which he enjoined, afford additional evidence.

What he heard “ and learned with his Father,” concerning his nature, and perfections, and grace, he made known unto the sons of men. “ Who hath known the “ mind of the Father, but he to whom his Son shall “ reveal him ? ” His pure morality united with his sublime doctrine in the general proof. He preferred substantial to splendid virtues. He checked the origin of vice in the budding thought of the heart. He directed the attention to positive duties, more than to ostentatious observances. The signs of an impostor did not exist in his character. Living among a superstitious race, he was free from superstition. He respected religious ordinances, but assigned them their proper place among human duties. He was candid

and liberal among a narrow contracted people, who arrogantly affected superiority to all the other nations. Nor do we behold in his conduct any attempt, either to aid the views of human governments, or to promote ambitious purposes in his followers. It is scarcely necessary to add, that his practice corresponded with his doctrine; and that in him all the virtues of humility, meekness, gentleness, sensibility, candour, and benevolence, shone forth with unequalled lustre. His enemies being the judges, none could charge him with any species of guilt.

The attention is next attracted by the sufferings to which Christ and his followers were exposed in the establishment of Christianity.

Instead of enumerating the sufferings of Christ from the narrative of the Evangelists, let us listen to the predicted account of them, given in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah's prophecy. A comparison of the predictions of the prophet, with the well-known facts of the historian, must, in the strongest manner, carry conviction to every mind. Jesus, during his abode on earth, "had his visage more marred, and his form, "more than the sons of men; he was as a root out of "a dry ground; he was despised and rejected of men, "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs; he bore "our griefs, and carried our sorrows; he was wounded "for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, and "the chastisement of our peace was upon him. It al- "so pleased the Lord to bruise him, to put him to "grief, and to lay upon him the iniquities of us all." But, nevertheless, he rose superior to this accumula- tion of calamities, and "was exalted, extolled, and "raised very high; he sprinkled many nations, and

“ kings were silent at his approach, he saw of the tra-
 “ veil of his soul, by his knowledge he justified many ;
 “ he divided a portion with the great, and the spoil
 “ with the strong ; he made his grave with the rich.
 “ He was taken from the prison of the grave, and as-
 “ cended up into Heaven, and there continues to make
 “ intercession for the transgressors. Because he hum-
 “ bled himself, and became obedient to death, even
 “ the death of the cross, therefore God also hath high-
 “ ly exalted him, and given him a name that is above
 “ every name ; that at the name of Jesus every knee
 “ should bow, and every tongue confess that he is Lord,
 “ to the glory of God the Father.”

By the testimony of the heathen historians, formerly adduced, the severe sufferings of the followers of Christ were fully authenticated. Nor can we account for these willing and stedfast sufferings upon any principle of human action, which operates in the human mind, except the full conviction of the heavenly nature of the cause for which they suffered. And even, according to the testimony of his enemies, the followers of Christ were not charged with any crime, but their stedfast adherence to the faith.

In closing the proof, the rapid progress of the gospel, and its continued effects upon society, are not to be forgotten.

Behold the moral conquests which the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom has made in the world, and every victory will afford additional proofs. Addressed to the Jews, it was hostile to their habitual opinions, upon which their hopes, their partialities, and their consolations were founded. In that nation, the public mind had long entertained the confident expectation of

a temporal Messiah, who, by a rapid succession of victories and triumphs over the Romans, and over all their enemies, should advance their nation to the summit of worldly grandeur. The discovery of the reverse was painful to the Jewish mind, and consequently strongly opposed. It required a power more than human, to vanquish such opposition; and it was greatly increased, from the circumstance of the Jewish rulers having crucified the founder of that religion. For the first preachers of Christianity having to charge them with his murder, in the presence of the multitude, brought upon themselves their indignation, and exposed them to persecution, and every consequent calamity. Nor was the nature of the new religion calculated in any degree to flatter the pride of Rome, or to interest the Roman government in its favour. Such opposition could not have been overcome, and such hardships endured, unless Omnipotence had defended and prospered.

When these heralds of Christianity entered a heathen country, their opposition was rather increased than diminished. They proclaimed irreconcilable hostility with every article of religious belief, with every object of religious worship, with every idolatrous statue, altar, and temple. The heathen raged, the tumult arose, the opposition was great, but the apostles were victorious. Princes enacted severe laws, inflicted severe punishments, and the populace burst forth in violent outrages; yet the conquests of Jesus increased in number; and the greater the opposition, the more glorious the triumph. The success of some of the apostles among the Jews was very considerable; but that of Paul among the Gentiles was eminently conspicuous.

Lo ! here is a young man, educated in all the partialities of the Jews, who once flamed with zeal for the defence of the falling cause of Moses : now he is miraculously changed in his religious sentiments, and, with redoubled zeal, he goes forth to preach the faith which he once laboured to destroy. Behold him, not only going forth to preach the resurrection, but, in his own conversion, carrying along with him a strong proof of the truth of Christianity. Unprotected by any hand but Omnipotence, he preaches the gospel of the kingdom to the heathen : the multitude listen ; they are converted, and the heathen temples abandoned. Nor could any toils, or hardships, or dangers, or difficulties, intimidate or interrupt the progress of this Christian hero. “ Whilst in journeyings, often in perils of waters, “ in perils of robbers, in perils by his own countrymen, “ in perils in the wilderness, in perils by the heathen, “ in perils in the city, in perils in the sea, in perils “ among false brethren, in weariness and painfulness in “ watchings, often in hunger and thirst, in fastings, in “ cold and nakedness,” he still persevered, not “ counting his life dear unto him, so that he might finish his “ course with joy, and the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the “ grace of God ! ” Under the guidance of miraculous influence, what might be expected from a man endowed with such penetration and strength of genius, persevering activity, invincible courage, unwearied patience, firm fortitude, and ardent zeal ! Hence we find, that during the days of Paul, the gospel had been preached in all the Roman world ; and although he, and the rest of the apostles, suffered death in the prosecution of their noble design, yet others instantly arose, endowed with

similar activity, to prosecute the conquests of the Christian faith. The struggle was long and violent, between the gospel of Christ and the prejudices of the Jews, the superstitions of the Gentiles, the political interests of the rulers, and the accumulated power of Rome; yet victory at last declared itself upon the side of the gospel, and the Roman eagle and sceptre fell prostrate before the cross, and Christianity herself assumed the purple: "The kings of the earth and the mighty men brought "their glory and their honour into the gospel church. "The sons of Zion were brought from afar, and her "daughters from the ends of the earth. This is the doing of the Lord, and it is wondrous in our eyes."

Now, it is a maxim of universal application, that every effect must proceed from an adequate cause; but no natural cause, or concurrence of natural causes, whatever, can account for these effects. The power of God, displayed by the miracles which attended the commencement and progress of Christianity, *alone* can explain and account for these revolutions in the moral world. To assert that these effects were produced without the power of miracles, would be to admit the greatest possible miracle, or rather the greatest absurdity.

Nor are the moral conquests of Christianity ended. The effects of the Christian doctrines, institutions, and precepts, are the same in every country, and in every age. The continued influence of this system upon the natural, political, and moral comforts of the nations, is an increasing evidence of its celestial origin. It is a manifestation of universal utility, and of universal benevolence. It displays the whole of the divine nature. It unfolds the counsels of eternity, and all the fulness of divine mercy. It extends its friendly aid to every

people, and nation, and language, under the canopy of heaven. Nor shall its celestial exertions diminish, until the knowledge of the Lord cover the earth, as the waters cover the channel of the sea.

Retiring from this field of convincing evidence, let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering. Let us "be ready to give every one that asketh us, a reason of the hope that is in us." Let our minds be established in the faith, in opposition to all the attacks of infidelity. Whilst our hearts overflow with grateful emotions towards the Father of Lights, for this enlarged manifestation of his grace, let us properly improve our advantages, remembering, that to whom much is given, of them the more will be required. Let our ardent supplications also ascend to the throne of grace, for the coming and glory of Christ's kingdom, that the conquest of mercy may extend to every quarter of the globe, and that this system of religion, which is adapted for the salvation of all nations, may be realized in its full extent.

LECTURE V.

Doctrine of the Trinity.

1 JOHN v. 7. “*For there are Three that bear record in Heaven, “the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three “are one.”*”

THIS subject is both interesting and important. Here the strongest powers of penetration and of genius will find ample exertion. On this subject the most eminent and learned have wrote with diffidence, and investigated with caution; and it is certainly one of the most solemn which can employ the exertion of the intellectual faculties. Since, therefore, the ground over which we are now to walk is holy, let us approach with trembling anxiety and holy awe.

Previous to the direct proof, the attention is solicited to the history of this controversy.

Error is half detected, when traced to its original source. The history of Eden, and many passages in the Old Testament writings, prove, that this doctrine was revealed to the church in the dawn of time. With this agree the sentiments of the Jewish Rabbies, who say, “that the Father is God, and the Son is God, and “the Holy Ghost is God, Three in One, and One in “Three.” The visible and glorious exertions of the sacred Three, during the days of Christ’s humanity,

gave additional lustre to the former revelations. Infernal malignity, and human depravity, however, soon began to attack this foundation truth. Simon Magus was the first who opposed the doctrine of the Trinity. He maintained, that "the Father, the Son, and the "Holy Ghost, were only different names under different operations."

About thirty-eight years after Christ's ascension, Ebion, and Cerinthus, denied the divinity of Christ, asserting, that "he had no existence before his formation in the womb of the Virgin Mary; and that he "was only a mere creature." These erroneous sentiments roused the holy indignation of the venerable John, who, seizing his pen, wrote that admirable description of the divinity of Christ contained in his writings. Rapidity is not always successful. This early attack, before the days of inspiration were ended, has provided the church with ample materials to defend this doctrine against all opposers in every succeeding age.

But, although error was refuted, and truth victorious, yet, the active adversary of salvation soon induced others to oppose and blaspheme, by attacking this doctrine, some on one side and some on another. Scarcely had two centuries rolled along, when Artemon and Theodosius openly denied the divinity of Christ, and subverted the faith of some.

About sixty years after, the Bishop of Antioch imitated their conduct. Eusebius, the famous historian, informs us, that the Christian bishops ran together against him like a wolf who was about to destroy the flock, and, in a general council, three years after, condemned his heresy, and deposed him from his office. When ministers love the truth, they will be active in its

defence, and “ will earnestly contend for the faith once “ delivered to the saints ;” but when lukewarm and indifferent, they will be slow in their operations, and undeterminate in their opposition to error.

Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria, appeared a few years after, denying the equality of the Son with the Father. He greatly disquieted the peace of the church ; and, from his remarkable success, the opposers of the doctrine of the Trinity first obtained the name of *Arians*. In consequence of this heresy, the first general council was convened at Nice, in the year three hundred and twenty-five, where the sentiments of Arius were publicly condemned. The storm, however, was not yet turned into a calm. The insinuating address of Arius, and the countenance given to his tenets by several emperors, raised a bloody persecution, which raged with considerable violence during thirty-six years. Behold, blood now streams in consequence of adherence to truth. The beginning of error resembles the flowing river, which, by the accumulation of tributary streams, swells in its course, until it becomes so violent and impetuous as to overturn the fairest monuments of ingenuity and toil. Scarcely was this Arian persecution ended, when Photinus, bishop of Syrmium, denied the divinity of Christ, and his pre-existence before he was born of the Virgin Mary. This blasphemous opinion even the Arians themselves condemned. Photinus, however, by a pleasant and subtle mode of reasoning, drew away many disciples after him. Insinuation is the hand-maid to seduction.

Baffled in his former attempts to overturn this foundation truth, the enemy of salvation instigated Macedonius, the bishop of Constantinople, in the year three

hundred and sixty, to make a new attack, by denying the divinity of the Holy Ghost. When old errors are unsuccessful, new ones are invented. The adopters of this opinion were denominated "Fighters against the "Holy Ghost." This heresy was condemned in a second general council, held at Constantinople about twenty years after. The effects of error, however, only tended to its own destruction. The talents and zeal of the advocates for truth were roused to vigorous exertion in defence of the truth.

But error refuses to be ashamed, and infernal malignity to be at rest. Another sect arose, who acknowledged only a nominal Trinity, and denied the distinction of persons in the Godhead. This, with a small variation, was only reviving the opinion of Simon Magus and his followers. These are the different attacks made upon the doctrine of the Trinity, during the first four centuries.

In the two following centuries, the tongue of calumny was chained, and the church remained in the full possession of this glorious doctrine. In the beginning of the seventh century, however, this doctrine was again opposed by John Philiponus, a famous philosopher of Alexandria, who denied the individual unity of the Godhead, teaching, that "there was not one common "essence in the Godhead, but that each of the persons "in the Trinity had a distinct nature, as well as a "distinct person." These were properly denominated Tritheists, or admitters of three gods as well as three persons. After this heresy was refuted, the doctrine of the Trinity remained unmolested for a season. Satan finding his efforts against the foundation unsuccessful, he began, in the after ages of the church, to batter his

artillery against the various parts of the superstructure. In this he was so woefully successful, that scarcely any doctrine remained pure in the hands of popery, except that of the doctrine of the Trinity. When matters were in this awful crisis, the Lord awoke, and, by the memorable Reformation, rescued his cause from the hand of the enemy. Alas! however, the happy reformation had scarcely dawned, when renewed attacks were made upon this doctrine.

I shall not detain the reader with a minute detail of all those, who, in one form or another, have denied the doctrine of the Trinity since the Reformation, but shall only mention a few of the more remarkable. In Geneva, Michael Servetus, a Spaniard, appeared in open blasphemy against the Son of God, and was banished by a decree of the senate; but returning, he fell a victim to the religious zeal of that period, and was condemned to the flames.

In Helvetia, Valentinis Gentilis revived the heresy of the Tritheists, maintaining, that "there were three eternal spirits, of different orders and degrees." The same sanguinary spirit overtook him; and he was condemned at Geneva and beheaded at Bern. Such is the infatuation of the human mind, that some have resisted even to blood contending for error.

Faustus Socinus, the founder of the Socinian sect, from whom they received this appellation, was the next who appeared in opposition to the glorious truth. His efforts were more daring than any of his predecessors. He laboured not only to overthrow the doctrine of the Trinity, but also the atonement, and the other essential doctrines of revelation. Socinus and his followers deny Christ to be God by nature, and assert that he is only

a mere man, and that the Holy Ghost is not a person, but an attribute.

Under the auspices of Dr Taylor of Norwich, Mr Foster, an Anabaptist minister in London, and others, the tenets of Socinus gained a wide circulation in England about the beginning of the last century. Until Dr Priestly was constrained to cross the Atlantic, for circulating tenets adverse to another king than Jesus, he furiously defended and propagated the tenets of Socinus. This he did, by publishing small pamphlets, slily worded, and full of insinuation, in order to beguile the ignorant and the unwary. The titles of some of these were, *The divinity of Christ disproved*—*The doctrine of the atonement disproved*. Such were the subjects that he discussed, and by the most vigorous exertions laboured to circulate. These, and similar efforts, paved the way to that flood of errors which has too much inundated that reformed church, and, alas! has also reached this northern quarter of the empire.

In the north-east of the kingdom, a Socinian catechism was published several years ago, but was soon refuted by the ingenious pen of an Episcopal clergyman. It is yet fresh in the remembrance of the public, that this cause was espoused by Dr M'Gill of Ayr, and too much countenanced by his colleague, Dr Dalrymple.

The appearance of such dangerous errors in this church roused the exertions of several eminent men who employed their pens in defence of the truth. Farther, the attention of ministers was directed to the essential doctrines of the gospel, and, in their public instructions, they guarded the minds of their hearers against the destructive influence of error. It is therefore pleasing to

add, that in this, as in many other instances, the efforts of enemies have promoted the interests of truth.

After this historical narrative, the truth of the doctrine is next to be substantiated.

Here the reader is reminded, that this doctrine is a mystery. Contending parties have acknowledged its mysterious nature ; and Paul, speaking of this doctrine, hath these memorable words : “ to the acknowledgment “ of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of “ Christ.” But what are the ingredients which constitute a mystery ? A mystery is a thing in itself actually true, but not contrary to reason. It is beyond the power of reason to discover, and, when revealed, beyond the powers of reason fully to comprehend.

A mystery is a thing in itself actually true, and not contrary to reason.

Nothing can be an article of Christian faith which is not true ; and nothing can be true which is contrary to reason. Those argue absurdly, who say, that in matters of religion men are to deny or to renounce their reason. The great object of faith is divine revelation ; and the truth of its existence is examined by reason, and believed upon the unerring testimony of God. Reason examines the arguments which prove the truth of revelation, and declares them consonant to the rational principles which universally determine the nature of evidence. Upon the principles of moral certainty, reason demonstrates, that the unanimous testimony of a sufficient number of credible, disinterested, competent, and inspired witnesses, merits the strongest assent of the human mind. This I call moral certainty—A kind of evidence which the human mind cannot reject ; or, it must adopt the absurd maxim of believing nothing, un-

less personally seen or heard. Such a principle is both impracticable in common life, and absurd in morals. Why does reason require the assent of any man to the doctrine of the Trinity? Because revealed and attested by God. Convinced of this fact, reason assures the mind, that the demonstration is equally solid, and the evidence equally strong, as that contained in any mathematical proposition. God is essentially and infallibly accurate, and he can neither deceive nor be deceived: therefore his declarations constitute *divine* evidence. Hence we find, that although revelation soars higher, yet reason and revelation always agree.

Farther, one truth cannot possibly contradict another; for it is obvious, that if any two truths could contradict each other, then two contradictions might be true, which is absurd. Hence, if it be true, in the Christian religion, *that one nature may subsist in three persons*, the same cannot be false in reason. I grant, that there is nothing in reason able to prove this fact; but it is equally true, that there is nothing in reason able to disprove it, or to evince it morally impossible. Nor is there any principle of reason which prohibits the mind from receiving the evidence of God, concerning what it does not fully understand.

Some may, however, argue, that for the same thing to be one and also three, is a contradiction; therefore reason is constrained to conclude it impossible. I answer, that for a thing to be one, in that *very respect* in which it is three, is a contradiction; but to affirm, that the thing which is *one* in this respect, may be *three* in another respect, is no contradiction. The Three who bear record in heaven are *one* in respect of nature and

essence, but *three* in respect of their personal characters and personal operations.

But it is said, that the single essence of one person is incommunicable to another person. This is the constant fallacy of the Socinians, and the poison which glides through all their arguments. Why? They measure a divine by a human nature; an infinite by a finite; an uncreated by a created nature; and, because they never saw it exemplified in the one, they erroneously infer, that it cannot in the other. The two natures about which the arguing takes place must be completely alike, before the same arguments can infer equal conclusions concerning both natures in the same respect. Hence I infer, that he argues as inconsistent with logic, as contradictory to revelation, who attempts to measure the divine existence of *God* by the manner of the existence of *man*.

Farther, reason herself will admit, that the divine nature has a manner of subsisting very different from the manner of subsistence of any created nature. Why may not the manner of subsisting be as different as their natures are confessed to be different? One nature being finite, and the other infinite, what is absolutely necessary *in man*, is not absolutely necessary *in God*. Nay, if there were nothing different, superior, infinite, and incomprehensible, in the manner of God's subsistence, where would his Divine Majesty appear? This one argument blunts the edge, and refutes all the arguments of the Socinians against the doctrine of the Trinity. These always affirm audaciously, but conclude weakly.

The Socinians have now been combated on the principles of reason, because here they entrench themselves;

and the intelligent reader will easily perceive, that these boasted pretenders to reason, disgrace reason by their mode of argumentation. Reason is not an enemy to revelation. The age of reason will be the age of religion, when she is not perverted and abused. Reason is the star, which, under the influence of the spirit, will guide all wise men to Christ. Those, whose works and faith dread a discovery, may descry reason ; but the man who consults his whole nature, will find, that all his faculties may be devoted to the most important services of religion. The law is the schoolmaster to bring to Christ ; and reason is the ray of divinity sent to contemplate the beauty of that revelation when presented to the mind. Reason is both the image and gift of God ; and every degree of her improvement is a farther degree of likeness to him.

A mystery is also beyond the power of reason to discover.

Reason can discover the existence of God, but cannot discover the manner of his existence. This is purely a matter of revelation. This is so evident, that it requires no proof. In vain some men have pretended to find traces of the doctrine of the Trinity among the heathen writers. If there are any faint traces, these owe their origin to revelation. This mystery is known only to God ; and he alone could publish it to the sons of men.

Another thing included in a mystery is, that when it is revealed, it is above reason fully to comprehend.

The feeble powers of man cannot reach the sacred intricacies of this doctrine. Reason investigates the revelation concerning it, and pronounces it valid, but pretends not to delineate the nature of the thing revealed.

The doctrine of the Trinity is not the object of the human senses; therefore these can give no decision in this question. It is the object of mind, and received from revelation. And when the mind is informed of the fact, and considers the rules and principles by which it judges of any thing, true or false, it rationally concludes, that it may safely depend upon the revelation concerning this matter as a certain truth. The Most High alone can describe the manner of his own existence; and reason is not qualified "to decide "in what mode Jehovah *can* and *must* exist."

The sum of my argument is this; that in the sacred mysteries of religion, sobriety and submission is the duty of man; and, that he who denies this article may *lose his soul*, and he who seeks to comprehend it may *lose his senses*. Faith alone is to be employed, and the obedience of the understanding given. A vain, impious curiosity may *weary* the mind, but cannot *inform* the judgment. It may render conceited, but cannot render wise to salvation. It may also provoke God to give over to strong delusions; for the things which are secret belong to him, and the things which are revealed belong to us and to our children.

It was farther mentioned, that a mystery is a thing not only actually true, but clearly revealed.

Let us therefore repair to the regions of sacred information in quest of the revelation of this doctrine. Positive declarations, comparative evidence, and inherent arguments, unite their testimony concerning this radical truth.

First positive declarations. In the history of creation itself, this truth was revealed. And God said, "Let us "make man in our image, after our likeness." Here a

plurality of divine persons appear. Let *us* make man in *our* image; and after *our* likeness. These plural pronouns, *us* and *our*, fully reveal the glorious truth. We farther find, that, when speaking of God, a plural noun is frequently used, and yet joined to a verb in the singular; and, on the other hand, when the noun is singular, the verb is plural. Unless there were a plurality of persons in the godhead, these phrases would be inexplicable; but, admitting the doctrine of the Trinity, they are obvious and natural. The work in which these persons are represented as engaged, is that of creation, which is peculiar to God. The work of creation is the unquestionable display of divinity. It is beyond the power of angels: they themselves are created and finite beings; therefore they could act no part in bringing into existence the things which were not. The conclusion is therefore unavoidable, that this address was not made to any of that exalted order. Nay, more, man was not formed *in the image*, and *after the likeness* of angels, but *in the image*, and *after the likeness* of God. The following argument therefore results from this sacred passage. “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth; but God, in the creation of man, the noblest part of his work, consulted with other persons, who were equally engaged in performing that part of creation: therefore there is a plurality of persons in the godhead.”

In different parts of the early history of man, the same truth is revealed. Such is the interpretation of the sacred declarations. “And the Lord God said, Behold the man is become as one of us*.” And again the Lord said, “Let us go down, and there confound their

“ language*.” These forms of speech plainly indicate the existence of a plurality of persons in the God-head. Nor let any man say, that these modes of language are only used in allusion to the style of kings and monarchs, who, in support of their royal dignity, use the plural number; for the Hebrew language is unacquainted with any such form of address, and such a form of speech was unknown to princes in that early period of society. Nay, even the ambitious princes of Persia speak in the singular number. “ Artax-
“ erxes, king of kings; Unto Ezra the priest, I make
“ a decree;” and again, “ I, even I, Artaxerxes the
“ king, do make a decree, to all the treasurers which
“ are beyond the river†.” In a similar manner do the other haughty kings of Persia express their royal mandates. “ I Nebuchadnezzar make a decree‡;” and, “ I king Darius make a decree||.” How absurd, then, to force a modern form of speech into the business of the first ages, in order to serve the cause of the Arians and Socinians. May not that cause be deemed desperate, which is constrained to have recourse to arguments of this nature? Such a form of address is rather humiliating than dignifying. Princes, in issuing laws, diffident of their own wisdom and power, unite their counsellors with them, and thereby dividing both the honour and responsibility. “ But who hath been
“ Jehovah’s counsellor, or who hath taught him wisdom? With whom took he counsel, or who taught
“ him knowledge? ”

In the hundred and tenth Psalm, the venerable king of Israel expresses his sentiments concerning this doc-

* Gen. xi. 7. † Ezra, vii. 12. 13. 21.

‡ Dan. iii. 29. || Dan. vii. 25. 26.

trine in the following words: "The Lord said unto my " Lord, sit thou on my right hand till I make thine " enemies thy footstool." When reasoning with the opposers of his dignity, in the days of his humanity, Jesus himself applied this passage to prove his supreme divinity. He interrogated the perverse Jews, saying, " What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he? They " answered, The son of David. He again asked them, " How then doeth David, in spirit, call him Lord, say- " ing, the Lord said unto me, Lord sit thou on my right " hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If Da- " vid then calls him Lord, how is he his son?" The energy of his reasoning silenced his adversaries. In this passage two divine persons are distinctly mentioned, which proves the doctrine, in opposition to those who deny the existence of more than one person in the Godhead; and the comment of the faithful and true witness establishes this testimony beyond the possibility of a doubt.

Similar is the doctrine taught by the evangelical prophet, in the sixth chapter, and third verse of his prophecies. " Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts." And the same Almighty Being adds, in the eighth verse, " Whom shall I send, and who will go for *us*? The The plurality of persons in the Godhead is taught by the phrase, "*Who will go for us*;" and the unity by the term, *Lord of Hosts*. These, and many other passages in the Old Testament, prove, that this doctrine was revealed unto the ancient church. The whole of that manifestation was dark and obscure, and only the shadow of better things to come. Accordingly, this article of revelation was more amply disclosed, when the Light of the World appeared to dispel the darkness which had long hovered over the nations.

LECTURE VI.

The Doctrine of the Trinity.

MATH. xxviii. 19. “*Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, “baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and “of the Holy Ghost.*”

In a former lecture, the history, the mysterious nature, and the revelation of this doctrine, as contained in the Old Testament were considered. In proportion, as the history of salvation was unfolded, so was the foundation-mystery of the Trinity. The purpose of man’s redemption first displayed this doctrine to intelligent beings, consequently, the more illustrious display of salvation afforded the human mind all the information concerning this sublime doctrine, which it is possible for its limited powers to comprehend.

To the New Testament regions, therefore, let us now hasten, where this truth resembles the dawning light “shining more and more unto the perfect day.” Scarcely have we entered these, when lo! this doctrine appears clothed in all the majestic dignity of celestial evidence. In the third chapter of Matthew’s history, we find the following narrative: “And Jesus, when he “was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: “and, lo! the heavens were opened unto him, and he “saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and

“ lighting upon him: and, lo! a voice from Heaven, “ saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well “ pleased.”

The destined hour of Christ’s manifestation to Israel being come, he repairs along with the multitude to the baptism of John ; and on that memorable occasion, we behold him emerging from the water of baptism, the Spirit descending upon him in the likeness of a dove, and hear the Father, with an audible voice from heaven, saying, “ this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well “ pleased.” How strong the evidence here afforded, of a plurality of persons in the Godhead, when both the Father and the Spirit condescended to reveal their personal characters to mortals, and also to give their united testimony in the presence of so many witnesses, to the divinity of Christ’s character, and to the validity of his mission.

It is singularly remarkable, that the doctrine of the Trinity is revealed, in every memorable interference of God in behalf of men. In the creation of man; at the fall of man; the confounding of languages; in the appearance made to Abraham; to Moses, in the burning bush, when he came down to deliver Israel from the tyrannical bondage of Pharoah; and to Joshua, in the plains of Jericho, when he was about to accomplish the promise made to Abraham, of causing his seed to inherit the land of Canaan; to his servant Isaiah, when he was about to reveal to him the glory of the gospel dispensation; and on this eventful occasion, when Jesus was about to enter upon the great work of the actual redemption of the world. Why were such revelations of this doctrine made along with the performing of these mighty actions, unless to teach men, not only

that there are three persons in the Godhead, but also, that these three are alike actively employed for the welfare and salvation of mankind.

It admits of no doubt, that the appointment of religious ordinances in the church, is a divine act, and the celestial prerogative of God only. In the history of Christianity, however, we find, that the ordinance of baptism was actually appointed by Christ, publishing to the churches his eternal power and Godhead ; “ Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing “ them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and “ of the Holy Ghost.” The dispensing of this ordinance, is unquestionably one of the more solemn acts of religious adoration ; but religious worship is due only to God ; hence, when Jesus commanded his disciples to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, he certainly taught them that these three are alike, the one living and true God, the great object of religious adoration and reverence ; or, if this is denied, then it follows that Jesus taught his disciples, and all the Church, gross idolatry. The latter is impious, the former is certain.

The Spirit rested upon him in the likeness of a dove, emblematical of the anointing and qualifying of Jesus for the arduous work on which he was about to enter. The Spirit descended on the apostles on the day of Pentecost, to qualify them for their work ; so the Spirit descends upon Christ on this occasion, to qualify him for his undertaking. Jesus, however, was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows : “ The Spirit “ of the Lord God was upon him, because the Lord “ had anointed him to preach good tidings unto the “ meek ; he had sent him to bind up the broken-heart-

“ ed, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all that mourn.” Correspondent to these declarations, it is said, “ that he giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him;” in this passage also, the Father, by an audible voice from heaven, bears his heavenly testimony to the Sonship of Christ, “ this is my beloved Son,” and also gives his approbation of the Mediatorial Work, “ in whom I am well pleased.”

How absurd then the conduct of the enemies to this doctrine, and what a perversion of language, to assert that God here commands to baptize in the name of a *mere name*, or of a virtue. Can a *mere name* or *virtue* confer upon the baptized person the blessings of the new *covenant*? Would God unite with himself, in this solemn religious ordinance, any person or persons of a created or finite order? Would he teach men to give to any creature that religious homage which is due to himself alone? Perfectly impossible! Such a conduct would militate against all the conceptions which men are taught to entertain concerning his nature, perfection, and wisdom. Investigating the nature and the evidence contained in this passage, the rational powers are constrained to conclude, that these Three Persons here mentioned are equally possessed of the perfections peculiar to the Godhead. To all this accumulation of proof, it may be added, that he who denies the divinity of any one of these persons, renounceth all his confidence in that person, for the accomplishment of that part of the covenant peculiar to him whose divinity is denied. That of the Son, the renunciation of

his redemption, and that of the Spirit, the renunciation of his sanctifying influences.

The apostolic blessings pronounced upon the church is another passage in the New Testament where a trinity of persons in the Godhead is clearly revealed. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen *." Here all the three persons are addressed as the supreme object of religious adoration ; and the distinct blessings which each of these confer, in the economy of salvation, are particularly invoked. How striking is the similarity between the Old and the New Testament blessing ! " And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron, and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee, and the Lord keep thee ; the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee ; the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace†." In this passage Aaron and his sons are directed to ask these blessings in the order in which they are represented in the Scriptures as dispensed by the different persons in the Godhead ; protection from the Father, grace from the Son, and peace from the Holy Ghost. Certainly both these passages represent the guardian care, the heavenly blessing, the infinite love, the unbounded grace, the purifying influence, and all the present joys and future glories of the church in every age, as flowing from the three persons of the Godhead. But these are favours which in their very nature are infinitely beyond the power of any created

* 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

† Numb. vi. 22—27.

being to confer ; therefore these three are the living and true God.

Similar is the nature of the evidence afforded by the fervent wish of John in behalf of the seven churches of Asia. " Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which " is, and which was, and which is to come ; and from " the seven spirits which are before the throne ; and " from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the " first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings " of the earth*." Here these persons are described as the source of grace ; therefore of equal dignity, and entitled to equal adoration.

Paul, in the second chapter of the Ephesians, also represents these three as connected in one of the essential exertions of salvation. In the fourteenth verse, Christ is denominated our peace ; and in the eighteenth it is written, " Through him we both have access, by " one Spirit, unto the Father." Here not only are three persons expressly mentioned, but they are so in a different order ; the Son first, the Spirit second, the Father third ; teaching that the order of placing them is indifferent, and consequently their equality is clearly proved : the Father the object of adoration, Christ the reconciler, and the influences of the Spirit the great mean.

The words of Paul to the Colossian church, reveals this doctrine in a very explicit manner. " To the ac- " knowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the " Father, and of Christ†." If the term God is here considered as used in a personal sense, then it denotes the Holy Ghost, the third person of the Godhead. Hence a strong and clear proof is afforded, *and with this addi-

* Rev. i. 4.

† Colos. ii. 2.

tional advantage, that by the last of the three being placed first in the order, we are assured that the more common order is not used to denote any inferiority in the Son or Spirit. And should the term God be considered as expressive of the essential perfections of the divine nature, then the argument is, that since that divine nature is alike applied to the Father and to Christ, the conclusion for more than one person in that nature is undeniable.

Expressive and strong are the words of Paul to the Thessalonians: “ The Lord direct your hearts unto “ the love of God, and unto the patient waiting for “ Christ *.” Here former reasons apply in all their force. The word Lord is used from the beginning of the chapter, and expressive of the personal work of the Holy Ghost; and not only three divine persons are mentioned, but the last person of the Godhead is mentioned first: accordingly, the usual order of mentioning these persons does not invalidate the divinity of the Son and Spirit.

I close this part of the evidence, by the testimony of John †, “ For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and “ these three are one.” These three are equally described as bearing witness. In the strict use of language, persons only, and neither things nor virtues can bear witness. This work, ascribed to these, sufficiently evince, that they are three distinct persons, capable of bearing record, and emitting a distinct testimony. A distinct person is necessary to constitute a legal witness. They are likewise distinguished by their specific names. The three that are mentioned in the following

* 2 Thess. iii. 5. . . . + 1 John viii. 7,

verse, as bearing witness, do so in a figurative sense; and the language of the Evangelist sufficiently marks this distinction. Concerning the three that bear record in heaven, he says, “*These three are one;*” and concerning three that bear witness on earth, his words are, “*and these three agree in one.*” These three are one in essence, and these three agree in one testimony. The divers miracles and gifts of the Spirit, bore witness to the doctrine and character of Christ. The water of baptism attesteth the purity of the Christian system, and also the obligation upon all who are dignified with the character of Christians, to display in their conduct the beauties of holiness. The blood witnessed that the truth of Christianity was sealed by the blood of Christ; and that it is sufficiently efficacious to cleanse from all sin.

The sum of the whole evidence resolves itself into one distinct proposition: “That in the Old and New Testament the doctrine of the Trinity is clearly revealed, and that it is incumbent upon man to believe it upon the infallible testimony of God.”

Having considered the positive evidence, the comparative is next to be considered.

David, in the strongest terms, speaks of the second person of the Trinity *: “Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: “worship him all ye gods.” That angels are here called gods, and commanded to pay divine honours to the Son, is obvious from the interpretation of Paul †: “And “when he bringeth forth his first-begotten into the “world, he saith, let all the angels of God worship him.” In other parts of the writings of David, we find such a

* Psalm xcvi. 7. Heb. i. 6.

description of the second person, as evinceth, beyond all doubt, that he is a divine person, and revealed as such to the Old Testament Church: “ Thy throne, “ O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy king-“ dom is a right sceptre*.” In the seventh verse, the Father addresseth Christ, with respect to his human nature, and mediatorial office: “ Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest iniquity; therefore God, thy God, “ hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness, above thy “ fellows.” Celebrating the divine superiority, and supreme divinity of Christ, Paul applies these words to Christ †: “ Unto the angels he saith, who maketh “ his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire; “ but unto the Son he saith, thy throne, O God, is for “ ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.” How strong also are the words of David. Behold him addressing the Messiah, in the character of the Supreme God: “ I said, O my “ God, take me not away in the midst of my days, thy “ years are throughout all generations; of old hast thou “ laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are “ the works of thy hands; they shall perish, but thou “ shalt endure, yea, all of them shall wax old like a “ garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and “ they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and “ thy years shall have no end ‡.” This passage Paul expressly applies to the second person of the Trinity ||. The comparison illustrates and proves the doctrine of the Trinity. Many others might have been quoted, such as Numbers, fourteenth chapter, and twenty-second verse, compared with First Corinthians, tenth chapter, and ninth verse. In the one place, Israel is

* Psalm xlv. 6. † Heb. i. ‡ Psalm cii. 25. || Heb. i. 10.

said to have tempted God in the wilderness, and Paul, in the other, says, that they tempted Christ. The inference is unavoidable.

With a few examples of internal arguments, I shall retire from the consideration of this doctrine. Let us select one, out of many, from the Gospel of John*. "And Jesus said, I came down from heaven, not to do "mine own will, but the will of him that sent me; "and this is the Father's will who hath sent me, that "of all whom he hath given me, I should lose nothing, "but should raise it up again at the last day; and this "is the will of him that sent me, that every one which "seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have ever- "lasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day. "The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven. And "they said, is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose "father and mother we know? How is it then that he "saith, I am come down from heaven." Here the work of raising the dead, he ascribes to himself, and it enters into, and entwines itself throughout the whole of the argument, so that it is impossible to give any rational explanation of this passage, without admitting the doctrine of the Trinity. Is not the work of raising the dead peculiar to God? How then can this passage be explained, unless it is admitted that there are three persons in the Godhead, and that Christ is one of the number.

Another of the same kind may be adduced from the writings of Paul†: "He that spared not his own son, "but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not "with him also freely give us all things?" Now the

* John vi. 38—42. † Rom. viii. 32.

argument of the apostle, in this place, could have no force, unless the supreme divinity of Christ is admitted. Where would be the force, or propriety, of the reasoning? to say, "That since God hath not spared an angel, " or some very excellent and great man, how will he "not with him also freely give us all things." Sure this would be reasoning from the less to the greater, for all things arise in value, above any one created being, or thing. But, admitting the foundation truth, then the whole of the argument is connected and powerful. Numerous other instances might be adduced to prove, that without admitting this doctrine, no rational and solid interpretation can be given of many portions of sacred writ.

But say, what is the vast importance of this doctrine?

God is the fountain of excellence. To know him is the perfection of knowledge. But "who can by searching find out God, who can find out the Almighty unto perfection?" This is a work too arduous for created strength. To know and understand this, however, in so far as revealed, constitutes the chief glory and felicity of man. The creation of the universe displayed the perfections which were eternally concealed in the divine nature. The woeful event of the fall, afforded an opportunity to display the personal perfections of the Godhead. The wisdom and grace of the Father, in forming the scheme; the love and power of the Son, in accomplishing it; and the grace and care of the Spirit, in applying the redemption of Christ for the salvation of the chosen. A proper acquaintance with these personal characters of the Trinity, and the different works ascribed to them, is so intimately connected, that

the one cannot exist without the other. Hence the knowledge of this doctrine is of such vast importance, that all the other doctrines of revelation depend upon it, as so many branches upon one stock.

This doctrine is also of importance, as tending to teach mankind the true nature of religious worship.

“ God is a Spirit, and they who worship, must worship him in spirit and in truth.” The knowledge of God is necessary to the worship of God. This knowledge was enjoyed in Paradise, but, after the entrance of sin, man soon became so ignorant, that he worshipped the creature instead of the Creator. Destitute of revelation, mankind would have remained unacquainted with the proper object of religious veneration. But, in the sacred volume, men are taught to worship the Lord their God ; to honour the Son, even as they honour the Father ; and also, to revere the Lord, the Spirit. The proper object of worship is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, consequently they who either deny, or remain ignorant of the Trinity, worship an unknown God. Since then the purity of our worship will bear an exact proportion to our knowledge of this doctrine, its importance is sufficiently evident.

The importance of this truth farther appears from its connection with the peculiar doctrines of revelation.

I might show, that many of the essential articles of the Christian system depend upon this truth for their existence ; but let the following serve as an example : The doctrine of a sinner’s justification is unquestionably of the greatest importance. But what is the history of this doctrine given in Scripture ? It is, that God the Father, in the character of Judge, sustains the honour of the Godhead, and justifieth the ungodly. “ It

“ is God that justifieth.” That the righteousness by which the sinner is acquitted, is the obedience and atonement of Christ, which constitutes a righteousness perfectly adequate to the demands of the divine law ; and that the Spirit, by his enlightening influence, discovers this gracious act to the justified one, for his consolation and joy. Hence the connection of this doctrine with that of the Trinity. Nor can an awakened conscience depend for salvation upon any righteousness, but one which is adequate to answer the utmost demands of divine equity. None can save to the uttermost but God ; and if Christ were not God, he could not save one soul, far less the myriads of the redeemed.

I might proceed to show that this doctrine is intimately connected with the incarnation, obedience, atonement, intercession, and present work, of Christ ; with the regeneration, sanctification, and final happiness of believers, through the influence and care of the divine Spirit ; but those which have been mentioned, sufficiently evince its singular importance in the scale of redemption.

Since this doctrine is of such inexpressible importance to our present comfort and future happiness, how ought our minds to swell with emotions of gratitude towards the sacred Three, for the revelations given of this truth. Let us also study, with persevering diligence and holy concern, this revelation, that we may be more and more confirmed in its belief, and so experience the salutary consequences flowing from this fertile source of consolation and of joy.

LECTURE VII.

The Divinity of Christ.

JOHN i. 1. “ *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*”

THE supreme divinity of Christ is the next article in our plan. All those sacred declarations, which have been adduced to prove that he is a distinct person in the Godhead, also prove that he is truly and properly God. That the churches, however, may be more abundantly assured of the existence of this radical truth, the sacred oracles afford additional evidence. This evidence arises from the dignified appellations given him, the glorious perfections and almighty works ascribed to him, and from the divine homage which is rendered him, both in heaven and in earth.

The names by which the Holy Ghost reveals him in Scripture, prove his supreme divinity.

It is universally granted, that the name Jehovah is peculiar to God, and, in the most unlimited manner, expressive of divinity. By this glorious name, the inherent glory, the incommunicable excellence, and absolute independence, of the First Cause, are revealed to mortals. But, in a variety of places in Scripture, this name is applied to Christ; therefore it is certain that he is the true and living God. The following are

a few of many with which the sacred oracles are stored: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness. Prepare ye the way of the Lord, or Jehovah; make straight in the desert a highway for our God*." This prophetic description is, by an inspired interpreter, appropriated to Christ; therefore the inference is obvious, "This is he that was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight†."

Again, Isaiah says, "Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: Who hath declared this from ancient time? Who hath told it from that time? Have not I, the Lord, or Jehovah? And there is no God besides me; a just God and a Savior, there is none besides me. Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. Surely shall one say, In the Lord I have righteousness and strength. In Jehovah shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory‡." Upon the very face of these words there is ample evidence to prove that they are spoken concerning Christ. Is not HE the only name given under heaven, whereby men are to be saved, and to whom all the ends of the earth are to look for salvation? Are not the seed of Israel justified in Christ? Nay, is not Jesus the desire of all nations, the light of the Gentiles, and he in whose name they should trust? Farther, does not God himself say, "I am the Lord, and my glory will I not give to another, nor my praise to graven images." Would then the Holy Ghost, in Scripture, call Christ Jehovah, if he were not truly and properly God?

* Isa. xl. 3.

† Matth. iii. 3.

‡ Isa. xlvi. 21.

All parties are agreed, that the name *I am that I am* is peculiar to the Supreme Being, and expressive of his undenied and eternal existence.

When God was about to deliver ancient Israel from Egyptian slavery, he revealed himself by this name. Moved with holy anxiety respecting his important commission to bring Israel from the land of Egypt, Moses said unto God, “Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, “and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath “sent me unto you, and they shall say to me, what “is his name? What shall I say unto them? And God “said unto Moses, *I am that I am*; and he said, Thus “shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, *I am* hath “sent me unto you*.” Jesus, however, applies this name to himself; who, in reasoning with the perverse Jews, said, Before Abraham was, *I am*. Since, then, the names *Jehovah* and *I am* are ascribed to Christ, which in no instance are applied to any mere creature, however dignified in order or rank, the conclusion is unavoidable, that he is the Supreme God, in every possible sense of that glorious appellation.

The name God is expressive of self-existence, independence, and eternity, and the same, being in Scripture given to Christ, proves his Supreme Divinity.

In the history of God’s memorable interposition, in behalf of his oppressed church, the doctrine of the divinity of Christ was clearly revealed by this name. “And the Angel of the Lord appeared unto Moses in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush, and he looked, and behold the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush

“ is not burned. And when *the Lord* saw that he turned aside to see, *God* called unto him, out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses! and he said, Here am I. And he said, draw not nigh hither, put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover, he said, I am *the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*. And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon *God*. And *the Lord* said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry, by reason of their task-masters, for I know their sorrows*.” The name Angel is frequently given to the Son, but never to the Father, therefore it is unquestionably the Son who is here mentioned. Nor is there any change of the person, but one glorious Being acts throughout the whole scene. But the august Person, who in the beginning of the passage is called the *Angel of the Lord*, is afterwards called *Lord*, or Jehovah, and also frequently *God*. Nay, *the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*. Nor is it merely by divine appellations that the Godhead of Christ is revealed in this passage, for he appears in all the majestic holiness, and power, and knowledge of Jehovah. The flaming, but unconsumed bush, was strongly emblematical of his infinite purity. “ *God* said unto Moses, put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.” In this scene also, the divine power of Christ is displayed, by asserting his right to send Moses to deliver Israel, and to conquer Pharoah. The infinite knowledge of Christ is likewise revealed in these memorable

* Exod. iii. 2—7.

words, “ and the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry, by reason of their task-masters, for I know their sorrows.” Such is the plenitude of evidence contained in this ancient history, to establish the divine perfections and Godhead of Christ.

The united testimony of David and of Paul, also proves this doctrine. Enumerating the wonderful interpositions of heaven in behalf of Israel, and their base ingratitude towards their bountiful Benefactor, David says, “ yet they tempted and *provoked the most High God*, and kept not his testimonies*;” and Paul, when describing the same scene, and reprobating the same conduct, admonishes the church of Corinth, saying, “ neither let us *tempt Christ*, as some of them also “ tempted and were destroyed of serpents.” In the former of these passages, the person Israel tempted is denominated the Most High God, and in the latter, that same person is called Christ, therefore, the inference is unavoidable, that *He* is the true and living God.

David, in another place, says, “ Thy throne, *O God*, “ is for ever and ever†.” Here the person addressed, is not only called God, but the eternal duration of his reign is celebrated. But what is the comment of inspiration upon this passage? Paul, in his letter to the Hebrews, when celebrating the glorious divinity of Jesus, and his superiority to Moses, applies these words to him: “ but unto the Son, God saith, thy throne, “ *O God*, is for ever and ever, a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.”

In many other places of Scripture, this name, in the

* Psal. lxxviii. 56.

† Psal. xlv. 6.

most strict and unqualified sense, is ascribed to Christ; clearly proving, that whatever is included in that divine appellation is peculiar to Him, and that, if this name is expressive of Divinity when given to the Father, so also when given to the Son. John the Evangelist begins his Gospel with these words: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was *God*." In the charge which Paul gave to the elders at Ephesus, he says, "Feed the church of *God* which he hath purchased with his own blood." The purchasing of the church with his own blood is unquestionably a work peculiar to Christ, and never ascribed to the Father, nor to the Holy Ghost. Thomas also bore witness to this truth, when in all the genuine rapture of vanquished incredulity, he exclaimed, saying, "*my Lord and my God*." How strong and forcible are the words of Paul to the Roman church: "Of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, *God* blessed for ever*." Here, universal dominion and religious homage are both ascribed to Christ. Singularly explicit is the evidence contained in the following words to Titus: "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of THE GREAT *God* and our Saviour, Jesus Christ."

Peter also bears witness to the supreme divinity of his Master, when he says, "Through the righteousness of *our God* and Saviour, Jesus Christ†." The apostle John likewise says, "We are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ, this is *the true God* and eternal life‡." To all these, I add the evidence of Jude, "denying the only Lord *God*, and our Lord Jesus Christ." Nor let it be objected, that the term *God*

* Rom. ix. 5.

† 2 Peter i. 2.

‡ 1 John v. 20.

is sometimes applied to created beings, for in all these cases there are such limitations and restrictions mentioned, as sufficiently express the inferior or figurative meaning of the sacred writers.

The perfections ascribed to Christ, also prove his eternal power and Godhead. Eternal existence is peculiar to supreme divinity. With confident assurance, Reason herself teaches, that no creature or thing could spring forth into existence by the exertion of its own inherent strength ; therefore, the conclusion is obvious, that the Origin and Former of all, was himself uncreated, self-existent, and independent. In Scripture, however, eternal duration is frequently ascribed to Christ. The sacred volume commences with this declaration, “ *In the beginning* God created the heaven “ and the earth.” And John, in beginning to write his gospel, has these remarkable words concerning Christ: “ *In the beginning* was the Word, and the “ Word was with God, and the Word was God.” The same language which is used to denote the existence of God before the creation of the universe, is used respecting Christ, therefore his existence and eternity are of equal duration.

Celebrating the eternal existence and glory of the Supreme Being, Isaiah introduceth him as saying, “ Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel, and his Re-deemer, the Lord of Hosts, I am the First, and I am “ the Last, and besides me there is no God *.” But these words Christ applies to himself, no less than three different times, in the book of Revelations: “ I am “ Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, “ saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which

* *Isaiah xliv. 6.*

“ is to come, the Almighty*.” The evidence afforded to the eternal existence of Jesus, from the comparison of these passages, is sufficiently evident.

In elegant and flowing language, the prophet Micah describes the eternal existence of the Saviour. “ But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting†.” Here the evidence shines with convincing splendor, and the words require no comment. It may be sufficient to add, that Paul, when describing his divine excellence, uses the following explicit language: “ By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him and for him, and *he is* before all things‡.”

The perfection of immutability also attests the supreme divinity of Christ.

Eternal existence includes the perfection of existence, and likewise its immutability. That which is absolutely perfect, cannot be improved. If divine excellence could change, it must, of necessity, be either for the better, or for the worse; but the infinite wisdom of the Divine Being renders it impossible that he should change to the worse; and his infinite perfection renders it equally impossible that he should change for the better. Hence immutability is essential to divinity. Inspiration, however, ascribes this perfection to Christ, therefore he is a divine person. Of this, the evidence con-

* Rev. i. 8, 17. and xxii. 13.

† Micah v. 2.

‡ Coloss. i. 16, 17.

tained in the following passages is full proof. The infallible testimony of God the Father, shall first be adduced. But unto the son he saith, “ Thy throne, O “ God, is for ever and ever ; a sceptre of righteousness “ is the sceptre of thy kingdom ; and thou, Lord, in “ the beginning, hast laid the foundations of the earth, “ and the heavens are the works of thy hands : they “ shall perish, but thou remainest ; and they shall wax “ old, as doeth a garment ; and as a vesture shalt thou “ fold them up, and they shall be changed ; but thou “ art the same, and thy years shall not fail *.” Paul describes the immutability of Christ, saying, “ Jesus “ Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever †.” The evidence contained in these words is so strong, that all the subtlety and genius of adversaries cannot tarnish its lustre, nor invalidate its strength ; nay, we may challenge them to produce any form of words, better calculated to express immutability, than those last quoted. Nor can they deny that they are applied to Christ.

External duration and immutability also include omnipotence. Supreme divinity alone, is unlimited in its exertions. God alone can do whatsoever pleaseth him. This perfection, however, is ascribed to Christ, clearly establishing his eternal power and Godhead. Isaiah introduceth the church rejoicing, in consequence of the humanity and glory of Jesus, saying, “ For unto “ us a Child is born, unto us a son is given, and the “ government shall be upon his shoulders, and his name “ shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, the *Mighty* “ *God*, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of “ Peace ‡.”

* Heb. i. 8, 9, and 10.

† Heb. xiii. 8.

‡ Isaiah ix. 6.

Omniscience is another perfection peculiar to God. He who formed all things must have a perfect knowledge of their characters and qualities. "He that formed all things, shall not he himself know?" "To teach the churches, however, the supreme divinity of Christ, this perfection is in Scripture ascribed to him. Peter addressed Jesus, saying, Lord, thou "knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." "Here Peter makes a solemn appeal to Christ, as possessed of unlimited knowledge concerning the sincerity of his attachment. Hence, if Christ had not been possessed of this perfection, he would certainly have reproved him for such an act of blasphemy. Instead of this, however, he proceeds to give Peter a farther proof of his infinite knowledge, by informing of that kind of death by "which he was to "glorify God." Nor is this the only passage where this truth is taught. Jehovah himself declares his unlimited knowledge, saying, "I the Lord search the "heart; I try the reins." But Christ himself likewise says, "All the churches shall know that I am he who "searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto "every one of you according to your works*." Of this Jesus gave full proof during the course of his public ministry; therefore it was remarked of him, "he "needed not that any should testify of man; for he "knew what was *in man.*†"

Omnipresence is another perfection peculiar to God. "Do not I fill heaven and earth with my presence, saith "the Lord?" The perfections, however, which have already been proved to belong to Christ, obviously imply his omnipresence. If his power be universally felt,

* Rev. iii. 23.

† John ii. 25.

he must be universally present. Every agent must be present where he acts. Correspondent to this view of his character, omnipresence is expressly attributed to him in Scripture. Hence, said he unto his disciples, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." And again he said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." He farther taught the same truth, when he said, "If any man love me, my Father will love him; and we will come and make our abode with him."

But positive facts are superior in strength to every species of argument. Accordingly, actual exertions next present themselves, to prove the supreme divinity of Christ. In the most unequivocal manner, the work of creation proves supreme divinity. This work is so expressive of supreme divinity, that God the Father claims divine honours from this circumstance alone, in opposition to the false gods of the heathens. The natural indications of the mind, and the principles of reason, clearly teach that creation is the work of God. Eternal existence, unlimited power, and absolute independence, are included in creating power. There is an infinite distance between non-existence and existence; and nothing less than Almighty power can transfer from the one to the other. That Being who gave birth to universal nature, and by whose command the wheels of time began their incessant motion, has an unquestionable claim to supreme divinity. The decisive question then occurs, *Did Christ perform this work?* To this question reason can give no reply; but revelation answers in the most determinate language.

It has already been found, that all the three persons in the Godhead were equally employed in the creation of man; and, in the different parts of Scripture, we find this work promiscuously ascribed to them. The sacred conclusion is obvious, that if creation proves the divinity of one, it equally proves the divinity of all the three. Nor does the divinity of Jesus rest upon this evidence alone; for, in the most explicit language, the work of creation is appropriated to him. Celebrating the powerful majesty of Jehovah, David says, “Of old hast thou laid the foundations of the earth, “and the heavens are the work of thy hands*.” Paul quotes these words in his letter to the Hebrews, and applies them to Christ; therefore they afford an evident proof that he is the creator of all things†. In reiterated and forcible language, the work of creation is ascribed to Christ, in the beginning of John’s gospel: “All things were made by him, and without him was “not any thing made that was made‡.” In language not less energetic and strong, Paul ascribes the work of creation to Christ: “By him were all things created “that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and “invisible; whether they be thrones, or dominions, or “principalities, or powers: all things were created by “him, and for him||.” The sum of the whole is, that since creation is an undeniable proof of divinity, and Christ performed this work, he is certainly a divine person.

I know that an objection is brought against this argument, from these two expressions in Scripture, that God created all things *by Jesus Christ*, and that *by him* God made the world.

* Psal. cii. 25. † Heb. i. 10. ‡ John i. 3. || Col. i. 16.

To this I reply, that a twofold creation is mentioned in Scripture; a natural and a spiritual. The natural is the calling of non-existence into existence: the spiritual is the creation of the soul a-new in Christ Jesus. The first creation admits of no instrument; and Christ was the instrument of the second, and God's servant for that purpose. Admitting the supposition, however, that an instrument was used in the natural creation, what would follow? Certainly this obvious fact, that the instrument existed before the creation of the world. No instrument can be used before it exists. Hence, this is admitting his eternity or divinity, for which I contend. Farther, the work of creation is of such a nature, as totally to exclude the possibility of any instrument.

Nay, more; if any instrument was used, that instrument must have been sufficient to accomplish the work. But what instrument could produce something out of nothing? That instrument must either be finite or infinite. If an infinite, that would include the existence of two infinite beings, the one the principal, and the other the efficient, cause; which would involve an absurdity. Hence, if any instrument was employed, it must have been a finite one. But can a finite instrument produce an infinite effect? In the nature of things this is impossible. No effect can rise superior to its cause.

A familiar example may tend to illustrate this important matter. The strongest giant would in vain attempt to penetrate a *stone* with a *straw*. Why? Because the instrument was not suited to the work. With a proper instrument his gigantic strength might break

the stone in pieces, but with a straw he could not make the least impression.

These arguments are supported by the history of creation. There, not the least hint is given of any instrument being employed. Jehovah spoke, and it was done: he commanded, and it stood fast. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. God said, let there be light, and there was light. Let there be a firmament, and it was so.”

Farther, a review of the passages which are adduced in support of this objection, clearly proves, that it is the spiritual, and not the natural creation, which is there mentioned. In the first of these, Paul speaks of the dispensation of the grace of God, given him, towards the Gentiles; of the revelation made known unto him; and of his knowledge in the mystery of Christ; and of his being made a minister, that he should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which, from the beginning of the world, hath been hid in God, who created all things *by Jesus Christ**; who, from the beginning, employed him as the great medium in the glorious mystery of reconciliation.

In the second of these passages, Paul, in beginning his letter to his countrymen, reminds them of the former manifestations of God, under the Old Testament, by the prophets; and contrasts them with the manifestation given under the New, by his Son, “whom he appointed heir of all things; by whom also he made the worlds†;” whom he hath appointed heir of all that grace, mercy, and glory, which are to be conferred upon the faithful; and the spiritual Creator, both un-

* Eph. iii. 9.

† Heb. i. 3.

der the ancient and present dispensations of grace. "It hath pleased the Father, that in him all fulness should dwell. The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Out of his fulness have we all received, and grace for grace." Hence, a candid review of these passages clearly shews that it is the spiritual, and not the natural creation, in which Christ is the great instrument. From the whole of this accumulation of evidence, may we not confidently infer, that since Christ created all things, he is supremely divine. What shall we then say? Behold these heavens and this earth, yonder moon and these stars; and so long as these exist, or shine, or roll, so long are numerous proofs of the eternal power and Godhead of Jesus every where conspicuous.

The preservation of the world also proves supreme divinity.

Both Philosophy and Scripture teach, that he who conferred, must preserve existence. The existence of a finite being, in this moment, does not secure his existence in the next. Creating energy must still be exerted to preserve. The external structure, and the internal laws, of the universe, both owe their existence to creating power, and their preservation is owing to the same cause. Infinite strength is likewise necessary to preserve the different qualities of substances. Each of these have certain different specific qualities to answer certain determinate purposes; but if these were to alter their qualities, the consequence would be destructive. Bread is provided for the support of human life, but if its quality were to become poisonous, it would produce destruction instead of nourishment. Similar effects would follow, if the food destined for the various ani-

mals were to change its quality. Hence, both the immediate and the remote cause of preservation, declare omnipotence. The Sacred Oracles, however, in the most determinate language, ascribe the preservation of the world to Christ; therefore he is possessed of divine power. In that beautiful passage, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where Paul celebrates the glorious divinity of Christ, among other things, it is said, "He upholdeth all things by the word of his power;" and in another place, describing the same excellence, he asserts, that Christ "is before all things, and by him all things exist." By his own inherent, underived, and divine power, all things continue this day as they were; for he hath ordained them: consequently, upon the principles of Philosophy and Scripture, Jesus is the true and living God.

The work of redemption also proves supreme divinity.

Salvation is sometimes called the purpose which God purposed in himself, before the world began. Every intelligent agent forms a plan before he begins to operate. Infinite intelligence formed the plan of creation, before he appeared in the greatness of his power to create the world. God alone is eternal in his existence. Hence, when salvation was purposed before the world began, it was purposed by God. The purpose which he purposed in himself, without the aid or assistance of any other. Divine wisdom was employed in planning and adjusting the creation of the natural world, and so also of the spiritual. If divine wisdom was necessary to form the plan of creation, divine power was also necessary to execute that plan. Such is the fact in the spiritual creation. Before that guilty man could taste

of the sweets of forgiveness, a full compensation was requisite to divine justice. But who could give this, except one who both knew the full extent which was due, and who was also qualified to give that compensation? The law of God cannot be broken; it cannot be altered, or mitigated, or accommodated to the state of the sinner. Complete satisfaction must be given, or wrath will rest upon the guilty to the uttermost. This, however, was a work too arduous for created strength; Omnipotence alone could perform it. But this work is uniformly, in Scripture, ascribed to Christ; therefore he is a divine person. He is there declared to have magnified the law, to have made it honourable, to have purchased the church with his blood, to have obtained eternal redemption for the faithful, and to have redeemed them from the curse of the law, by being made a curse for them.

But, in addition to all the displays of divinity, given by Jesus when on earth, that work which he is now performing in behalf of men, establishes his supreme divinity. After his resurrection, he informed his disciples, that all power was given unto him in heaven and in earth. None, however, can retain universal power, but he in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Nor can any, but a divine person, exercise that power. To whom does the government of the world belong, but to him who created all things? To whom does the right of appointing ordinances and ministers in the church belong, but to him who is the object of divine adoration? Who has power to render the operations of religion effectual to the destined purposes of salvation? Who has power to quicken the sinner dead in trespasses and sins? Who has power to

remove the inveterate prejudices of depravity, and to vanquish the perverseness of the human will? Who has power to preserve the heavenly virtues in all their energy and vigour, until they are perfected in glory? Who can give the holy soul victory over death, and an abundant entrance into glory? None certainly, but a divine person. All these things, however, are in the most express and unequivocal language, ascribed to Christ, therefore his eternal power and Godhead shine forth with all the splendor of celestial evidence.

The divinity of Christ is farther proved from the religious homage which is given him, both in heaven and in earth.

That religious homage is due to God only, is the dictate of Reason, and the command of Revelation. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." The family of Adam depend upon God for their rational existence, its continuance, and all its connected joys; therefore all the earth ought to fear the Lord, and all the inhabitants of the world to stand in awe of him. Before him every knee should bend, in humble adoration and religious homage. To withhold this, is profanity, and to give that reverence to another, is idolatry. The universal practice of mankind has indeed admitted, that there is a certain degree of worship due to created beings. But every possible degree of worship divides itself into two classes; the superior and the inferior, or the civil and the religious. These are regulated according to the relative and inherent quality of the being to whom the worship is given: such is the uniform practice of mankind. Ascending in the scale of moral gradation, we arrive at the summit of excellence. To this unequalled *One*,

superior homage and reverence are due. In him every relative and inherent excellency center, therefore he is entitled to the most perfect and unlimited adoration. By the universal voice of mankind, and the testimony of Scripture, this homage is appropriated to the First Cause. But we have already found all these perfections and excellencies dwelling in Christ, therefore he has an inherent and natural right to divine adoration. Hence, although there were no recorded instances of religious worship being given to Christ, yet this right to receive that religious veneration, would be unquestionable. Reason and Revelation have, however, exemplified this principle. In many passages, both of the Old and New Testament, divine honours are ascribed to Christ. The first which I shall mention is the testimony of the venerable Jacob, in that truth-speaking period, when he was blessing the two sons of Joseph upon his death-bed. In that solemn hour, in all the holy fervour of soul, he said, “God, before whom “my Fathers, Abraham and Isaac, did walk, the God “who fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel, “who redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads*.” The appellation Angel, is in no instance applied to the Father, but uniformly to the Son; hence it is, the Son whom Jacob here invokes for temporal and spiritual blessings to descend upon “the lads.” The evidence contained in this passage is singularly strong. For, should the Arian contend that it is the Father who is here invoked by the appellation, *Angel*; then it would follow, that he received his commission from the Son, for he could not, in the nature of things, be his own angel, or messenger, nor the messenger of any

* Gen. xlvi. 15.

created being. This passage receives a sacred interpretation from Paul, who says, “ By faith, Jacob, when “ he was dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph, and “ worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.”

Clothed with equal majesty, and receiving equal adoration, the same Angel appeared to Moses in Horeb. To him, also, the God of Israel bore this honourable testimony, when he addressed the thousands of Israel, saying, “ Behold I send mine Angel before thee, be-“ ware of him, obey his voice, provoke him not, for “ he will not pardon your iniquities, for my name is in “ him,”—my peculiar perfections are inherent in his divine nature. In the character of the Captain of the Lord’s host, Jesus appeared to Joshua in the plains of Jericho, from whom he received divine honours.

In the New Testament, the same doctrine is clearly taught. There we are informed, that “ God hath highly “ exalted him, and given him a name which is above every “ name ; that at the name of Jesus every knee should “ bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and “ things under the earth ; and that every tongue should “ confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God “ the Father*.” The first of martyrs closed his eyes, calling, and saying, “ Lord Jesus, receive my spirit !” Such a solemn prayer from a person in his last moments, putting his trust in Jesus Christ, and committing his soul to his care, is an act of worship which would be gross idolatry if offered to any but God. Nor was Stephen singular in this act of calling on the name of Jesus. Ananias, addressing Jesus himself, when speaking of the persecuting conduct of Paul, previous to his conversion, says, “ And here he hath authority from

* Phil. xi. 9—11.

“ the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.” And Paul, when he had become a very different character, mentions the calling upon the name of Jesus as the peculiar characteristic of all believers. “ Unto the church of God, which is in Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.”

Nor did the incarnation of Jesus lessen his divine right to religious homage. Hence it is written of him, “ When he bringeth the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.” Obeying the command enjoined upon angels, Christ was frequently worshipped by men during the days of his abode on earth. Directed of heaven, the wise men came from the East to worship Christ at his birth. The ruler of the synagogue, and the woman of Canaan, also worshipped him. He was likewise worshipped by a leper whom he cleansed, and by a blind man whom he restored to sight; by those who were with him in the ship, when they experienced the display of his power in calming the fury of the waves; by the women who saw him after his resurrection; and by Thomas, who exclaimed, saying, “ My Lord, and my God.” By the disciples, when he first appeared to them after his resurrection; and, a second time, when they saw him ascend from Mount Olivet. Nor did he, in any one of these instances, reject this divine honour; which he certainly would have done, had he not been the proper object of religious adoration.

Nay more, the solemn ordinance of baptism, and the solemn benediction of the church, the one dispensed, and the other pronounced, in the name of Christ,

clearly prove his right to divine adoration. The sacred volume farther concludes with these remarkable words : “ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. “ Amen.”

I close this evidence, by reminding you of the worship which he is continuing to receive in the celestial world. John, in vision, “ beheld, and heard the voice “ of many angels round about the throne, and the living “ creatures, and the elders ; and the number of them “ was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands “ of thousands, saying, Worthy is the Lamb that was “ slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and “ strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And “ every creature in heaven or in earth, and under the “ earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in “ them, he heard saying, Blessing, and honour, and “ glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the “ throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.”

Prayer is certainly an act of religious homage. Temporal and spiritual blessings are all centered in God. He is the “ Possessor of heaven and earth,” and of every blessing which respects either the one or the other. Since, therefore, all blessings are centered in him, “ for “ all these things he will be inquired of by” the seed of Adam. He alone is the proper object of prayer. In numerous instances, however, Christ is addressed as the object of prayer. One example may be mentioned. Stephen, the first martyr, amidst the agonies of expiring nature, invoked Christ, saying, “ Lord Jesus, re-“ ceive my spirit.” Were more evidence needful, I might proceed to prove, that the various other parts of divine homage, thanksgiving, adoration, and faith, are also ascribed to Christ ; but sufficient evidence has

been adduced, to prove that divine homage is given to Christ, both by saints and angels.

Here let us make a solemn pause, to contemplate the character and glories of the Redeemer. Cast thine eye again, O believer, over the fertile field which we have now traversed ; behold it stored with “ all manner of pleasant fruits,” to cheer and to nourish the beloved of the Lord. Review the numerous and strong proofs of the supreme divinity of thy Saviour, and let all the finer emotions and feelings of thy soul move towards him in pious admiration and holy desire. “ Give unto him the glory due unto his name.” His name is Jehovah, “ the Most High over all the earth ; ” “ therefore let all the earth fear before him, and all the “ inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. Sanctify the Lord God of Hosts in your hearts, and let “ him be your fear and your dread. Beware of him, “ obey his voice, provoke him not.” Dwell with endearing rapture upon the perfection of his character. Behold him as the brightness of the Father’s glory, and the express image of his person ; in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead ; in whom all the divine perfections reign, in all their majestic splendour and heavenly excellence. Possessed of these perfections, what can he not perform in behalf of them who love him ? Can either the stratagems of Satan, or the deceptions of men, impose upon him who is omniscient ? Who can gain any advantage over him who is every where present ? Who can prove too formidable for him who is omnipotent ? Can he change in his purposes of love, who is immutable ? Jesus is “ the same yesterday, “ to-day, and for ever.”

Reflect, O believer, with increasing wonder and joy, upon the glorious power and infinite strength of thy Redeemer! Behold him coming forth from the habitation of eternity, clothed with all the strength and majesty of omnipotence, to create the universe. Behold him forming the earth, and stretching out the heavens: and say, O believer, since he hath done these things, what can he not do for thee? He has, in thy conversion, exerted the exceeding greatness of his Almighty power; and certainly he will not forsake the work of his own hands. He will carry forward to perfection that work which he hath so graciously begun. Trust then in him with all thine heart. What corruption, or temptation, or spiritual enemy, or adverse power, can prove too strong for omnipotence? He, who created, who preserves, and who has redeemed the world, can certainly perfect what concerns the holy soul. He will give strength to perform duty, to endure affliction, to vanquish temptation, and to triumph over death and the grave.

But the divinity of Jesus is fraught with terror to the sons of impenitence. "Know ye not, that we must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ?" Where then shall the wicked and ungodly stand? They will stand trembling on the left hand of the judge, waiting to receive their awful sentence from the lips of that very Saviour, whose mercy and grace they had despised. Who ever hardened himself against Christ and hath prospered? When the Lamb of God will assume the character of the Lion of the tribe of Judah, he will execute his righteous displeasure against the opposers of his kingdom and grace. Nor can any escape from his Almighty hand. Then the sinners in Zion shall be afraid; fearfulness

shall surprise the hypocrites. Then all their deception shall be disclosed. Then all their hidden abominations shall be published before an assembled universe. Then confusion, and consternation, and dismay, shall unite their violence to harass and to torment them.

But say, where then will the deniers of Christ's glorious divinity appear? What unwelcome sentiments will rush into their minds, when they lift up their eyes, and behold Jesus coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory, shining in all the celestial splendor of divine excellence, to the joy of his friends, and to the terror of his enemies? Where then will they fly for help? In vain shall they invoke the rocks and mountains to fall upon them, to cover them from the face of the Lamb. What mind can conceive, or pen describe the feelings of these men in that awful moment? Certainly true wisdom calls upon them now, to consider against whom they utter such blasphemous and hard speeches. It becomes them calmly to reflect upon the danger to which they are exposed, and, in time, to throw down the weapons of their rebellion—To listen to the plain and strong evidence of Scripture, concerning the glory and power of Christ, and hasten to him who is *now* exalted to give repentance and the remission of sins.—To him who says, “look unto me “ and be ye saved all the ends of the earth, for *I am* “ God, and besides me there is no Saviour.”

LECTURE VIII.

The Divinity of the Holy Ghost.

ACTS V. 3. 4. "Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled
"thine heart, to lye to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part
"of the price of the land? While it remained, was it not thine
"own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?
"Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast
"not lied unto men, but unto God."

AN accurate acquaintance with this doctrine is of singular utility. It is a foundation which supports a large superstructure of comfort. The inspiration of the Scriptures, the selection of the prophets and apostles, the qualification of Christ for his mediatorial work, the commencement and perfection of grace in the hearts of the faithful, all depend upon the divinity of the Holy Ghost. Nay more, the Holy Ghost is now come, and the particular period of his operations is commenced; therefore, the success of the Redeemer's kingdom, and the salvation of men, also depend upon the power of the Lord the Spirit.

In establishing this article of the Christian faith, the same arrangement may be adopted, that was observed in proving the divinity of Christ.

The names given to the Holy Ghost in Scripture, prove his divine character.

The name Jehovah is given to the Holy Ghost. In defending the essential dignity of Christ, it was shown, that this name is incommunicable to any created being, and expressive of underived excellence. This name however, is appropriated to the Holy Ghost. When Aaron and Miriam attempted to lesson the authority, and to vilify the character of Moses, the Lord appeared in his defence, as it is written, "The Lord came down "in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of "the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam, and "they both came forth. And he said, hear now my "words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord "will make myself known unto him in a vision, and "will speak unto him in a dream*." The interpretation of a New Testament writer, places the evidence contained in this passage, in all the force of heavenly conviction: "God, who at sundry times, and in divers "manners, spake in time past unto the Fathers by the "prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by "his Son†." With this evidence another sacred writer accords, saying, "Prophecy came not in old "time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The sacred evidence contained in these passages may be included in one distinct proposition: He who spake to the prophets in visions and dreams, was the Lord, or Jehovah; but Peter informs us, that the Holy Ghost inspired the prophets; therefore the Holy Ghost is Jehovah. The name Jehovah being expressive of divine perfections, necessary existence, absolute independence, and eternal duration, the person upon whom inspiration confers this name, is certainly divine.

* Numb. xii. 5, 6.

† Heb. i. 1, 2.

But this is not the only passage where the name Jehovah is given to the Holy Ghost. In that remarkable vision which Isaiah had of the glory of the Lord, he says, "I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then, said I, "Here am I, send me. And he said, go, and tell this people; hear ye indeed, but understand not, and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed." It is certainly Jehovah who here speaks; an inspired writer, however, applies these words to the Holy Ghost. "And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word. Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet, unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say, hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand, and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive. For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them*." Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet, but it was Jehovah who spake by the prophet, therefore the Holy Ghost is Jehovah.

But it may be asked, does the writer of the Acts contradict John, who applied these words to Jesus, in proof of his supreme divinity? To this I reply, that both the Son and Spirit, are strictly, and properly Je-

hovah; therefore there is no contradiction in applying these words to both. Farther, in the words of Isaiah, a plurality of persons are included, for both the singular and the plural are used; "Whom shall I send, and "who will go for *us*;" consequently the person who spake, whether the Father, or the Son, or the Holy Ghost, was strictly and properly Jehovah. The words apply with equal force to each of the persons of the Godhead. These are distinct persons, or the plural could not be used, nor the one address the other; and they are one in respect of essence, or the singular could not be used. When any one of the persons of the Godhead is employed in emitting a declaration, or performing a work, according to the established method of salvation, the same may be ascribed to all the persons of the Godhead.

There is an obvious distinction between the internal and external actions of the Godhead. In the internal or personal actions of the Godhead, that which is the action of the one is not the action of the other; but the actions which are terminated upon any thing separate from Deity himself, are the effects of those essential perfections which are common to all the three; therefore they may be ascribed to any one of the three. For instance, the personal act of the Father, in sending the Son, is not attributed to the Son; nor the personal act of the Son's coming ascribed unto the Father; and the personal act of the Spirit, proceeding from the Father and from the Son, is not ascribed to either of them. It is, however, uniformly found, that all the actions which respect the *visible exertion* of the divine perfections, are equally ascribed to all the persons of the

Trinity. Hence, instead of their being any contradiction between John and the writer of the Acts, a comparison of the passages affords a moral demonstration, both of a plurality of persons in the Godhead, and also, that the second and the third are equal in dignity with the first.

Again, Paul, in his epistle to the Hebrews, says, "When your fathers tempted me, and proved me, and "saw my works forty years*." But this work referred to is by Moses said to have been performed by the Lord, or Jehovah: "And he called the name of the place "Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the "children of Israel, and because they tempted the "Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us or not†?" But we find, in another place, that these are also said to have tempted Christ: hence, the reasoning employed concerning the former passage, here likewise applies in its full extent. He whom Israel tempted in the wilderness was Jehovah, and the writers of the New Testament inform us that this was the second and third persons of the Godhead; consequently, the name Jehovah is equally ascribed to them with the first person.

In the New Testament also, the name Lord is, in the most dignified and supreme sense, applied to the Holy Ghost. With the solemnity of religious adoration, Paul invoked the sacred Three in behalf of the Thessalonians, and mentions the Holy Ghost by the name Lord. "Now God himself, and our Father, and "our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you. And "the Lord make you to increase and abound in love "one toward another, and toward all men, even as we "do toward you: to the end he may stablish your

* Heb. iii. 9.

† Exod. xvii. 7.

“ hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our “ Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with “ all his saints.” In the third chapter of the second epistle to the same church, Paul admonishes them to pray that the word of the *Lord* may have free course and be glorified; informs them that the *Lord* is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil; then he adds, “ And the *Lord* direct your hearts into “ the love of God, and into the patient waiting for “ Christ.” The same dignified appellation is also given to the Holy Ghost, in Paul’s letter to the Corinthian church: “ But we all, with open face, beholding, as in “ a glass, the glory of the *Lord*, are changed into the “ same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit “ of the *Lord*,” or by the *Lord* the Spirit. In these passages, the works which are peculiar to the Holy Ghost, in the arrangement of salvation, are ascribed to him under the appellation *Lord*; fully substantiating his supreme divinity.

The name *God* is also given to the Holy Ghost.

It was formerly mentioned that the name *God* is used in Scripture in a superior and inferior sense, and that this name is sometimes given to created beings, because of some relative or official dignity which bears a resemblance to *God*. In these instances, however, the inferiority is sufficiently specified by the work ascribed to them, or by some appellation which renders the inferiority sufficiently obvious. Hence it follows, that if we find the name *God* given to the Holy Ghost, without any distinguishing mark of inferiority, the conclusion is unavoidable, that he is the true and living *God*. Such is the fact in many places. “ Peter “ said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to

“ lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? While it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto *God*.” When Peter charged this sin upon the wife of Ananias, he calls it a tempting of the Spirit of the Lord; and he aggravated the guilt, from the consideration that they had not only lied unto men, but unto the omniscient God. In vain the Arians say, that although the Holy Ghost was no more than a created spirit, yet lying unto him was a lying unto God, because Peter was his minister. It was contemning the master in the servant. For if the Holy Ghost was only a messenger of God, Peter had no necessity to mention this aggravation, because he himself was a messenger of God. His words are singularly strong: “ Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto *God*.” Hence, if the Holy Ghost was not God, where was that superior degree of guilt which Peter endeavour to fix upon Ananias and Sapphira? The obvious steps of their gradation were, they sinned against their own consciences, by the nefarious act; they sinned against the apostles and the church, by attempting to impose upon them; and they advanced their guilt to the highest degree, by lying unto the Holy Ghost; by wickedly supposing, that He who dwelt in the apostles by his miraculous gifts, and who resided in the church, and had taken upon himself the particular care of her, could not detect them in their lying deceit.

Writing to the Corinthian church, Paul also mentions the Holy Ghost by the name God. “ Know ye not that ye are the temple of *God*, and that the Spirit of

“ God dwelleth in you?” Here are two evidences of supreme divinity. He is called God, and religious adoration is given to him. It is certainly the peculiar right of the true God to have a temple, and to be worshipped with our bodies and spirits, which are his. Hence, says Paul, in another place, “ Know ye not that “ your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is “ *in you.*” *In you.* Is this language ever used respecting any created being referring to another created being? No: it is peculiar to God only, who dwells in the faithful by his gracious operations. Here I may adopt the reasoning of Augustine, who says, “ Though “ we were commanded to build a temple to the Holy “ Spirit of wood and stone, even that would be an in-“ contestible proof of his deity; but how much more “ doth this evidence the truth of his divinity, that we “ are not commanded to build a temple unto him, but “ ourselves to be a temple for him.” To all this evidence I may add the testimony of David the son of Jesse: “ The man who was raised up on high, the “ Anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet Psalmist “ of Israel, said, The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, “ and his word was in my tongue. The *God* of Israel “ said, the Rock of Israel spake to me: he that ruleth “ over men must be just, ruling in the fear of *God.*” Here he is called God, likewise the Rock of Israel; and the repetition of the name adds to the majestic solemnity of the passage. The demonstration and power of the Spirit are likewise denominated the power of God; and those who receive Christ by faith, are said to be born of the Spirit, and born of God. Hence we find, that the names and titles of the supreme God are given to the Holy Ghost, in Scripture, in such a manner, and

joined with such circumstances and works, as fully prove his divine excellence.

The divine *perfections* ascribed to the Spirit, afford additional proof.

Eternal existence is ascribed to the Holy Ghost. The eternal duration of the Holy Ghost is expressed in the following words: " and the Spirit of God moved " upon the face of the waters." This came to pass on the first day of creation, consequently, the Spirit existed in the beginning, before the heavens and the earth were created. It has already been found, that the phrase *in the beginning*, is expressive of the eternal duration, both of the Father and of the Son, and no reason can be assigned, why it may not equally prove his eternal duration, when applied to the Holy Ghost. If the phrase may change its meaning, so may the divinity of the Father and of the Son.

The evidence of the faithful and true witness also proves the eternal duration of the Spirit. Speaking of him in his personal character, as distinct from the Father and the Son ; Jesus said unto his disciples, " But " when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto " you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which " *proceedeth* from the Father, he shall testify of me." It is not only the personal property of the Spirit to proceed from the Father and the Son, but Christ, in this passage, expresseth his proceeding, in the same manner as Jehovah expresseth his own eternal existence, even as having neither beginning, nor change ; neither interruption, nor end. For here, it is said, he *proceedeth* ; not that he did proceed in past days, or that he will proceed in future days, but that he *proceedeth*, denoting a present and continued action. The eternity of

Jehovah is fully described by these words, "I am that "I am," so the permanent existence of the Holy Spirit is also described by these words, "I am that I am, "even the Spirit of Truth, who *proceedeth* from the "Father." He is always *present*, and with him there is neither past nor future.

In the epistle to the Hebrews, the Holy Ghost is called the Eternal Spirit. "How much more shall the "blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God; purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? Some interpreters think, that the Spirit by which Christ offered up himself, denotes his Godhead, which gave a dignified value to his offering, and conferred upon it a purifying efficacy. In this view, his being called the eternal Spirit, affords a proof of the divinity of the Son. Others think, that the eternal Spirit, in this place, denotes the glorious person of the Holy Ghost, who, by his influences upon the human nature of Christ, formed and preserved it spotless and pure; consequently, in this sense, it is expressive of the eternity of the Holy Ghost.. Was not Christ anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows? Was not the Spirit poured upon him without measure? Was he not formed by the Holy Ghost in the womb, *an holy thing*? Did not Christ, by the prophet Isaiah, say, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the "Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto "the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken "hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives; and the "opening of the prison to them that are bound; to "proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the "day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that

“mourn?” It is however pleasing to remark, that which of the two senses of the passage is adopted, truth is victorious, and the proof equally valid against the opposers of the divinity of the Son and Spirit. Nor does the matter now under discussion sustain any material injury, because the divinity of the Holy Ghost is abundantly proved from many other passages of Scripture.

But an objection is made to the eternity of the Holy Ghost, from the following passage, “but this spake Jesus “of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should “receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, be-“cause that Jesus was not yet glorified.” The word *given*, say they, is a supplement, therefore they contend, that the Holy Ghost had not *then* an existence. To this I answer, that the term Holy Ghost is here expressive of his miraculous gifts and operations. Such a form of language is frequently used in Scripture. The name of the person employed to express his actions. The Holy Ghost existed from eternity, but the solemn manifestation of his gospel influence was *not yet* commenced. The day of his manifestation to Israel, was upon the day of Pentecost, and that day was not yet arrived. This Old Testament manifestations ceased with the prophet Malachi, and the church had been deprived of the spirit of prophecy, during the intervening period.

Farther, it seems evident, that in the arrangement of salvation, each person of the Godhead has not only a particular work appropriated unto him, but likewise a particular period of more obvious and visible operation. Hence, the period of the Father will extend from the creation to the coming of the promised Messiah, or when “Christ shall deliver up the kingdom to God,

“ even the Father, that he may be all, and in all.” If the latter supposition is accurate, then the period of Christ will reach from Eden to the day of his accession ; but if the former, then his period will be restricted to the time of his abode on earth. But with respect to the particular period of the Spirit, it is sufficiently evident, that it extends from the day of Pentecost, unto the finishing of the mystery of God, by perfecting the saints for glory. According to this arrangement, the meaning of the declaration, that “ the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*, because that Jesus was not yet *glorified*,” is sufficiently evident. He was not yet *come* in all his miraculous gifts and divine operations, to perform his peculiar work in the restoration of Adam’s family. Similar is the interpretation of that passage where John’s disciples are represented as ignorant of the existence of the Holy Ghost, Paul “ said unto them “ have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed ? “ And they said unto him, we have not so much as “ heard whether there be any Holy Ghost *.” They were ignorant of the down-pouring of the Spirit, as in the days of the prophets. This ignorance, however, was soon removed ; for “ when Paul had laid his hands up “ on them, the Holy Ghost came on them, and they “ spake with tongues, and prophesied.”

Omnipresence is another divine perfection, ascribed to the Holy Ghost.

It is universally agreed, that the immensity of Jehovah, is elegantly described in the following words : “ whether shall I go from thy Spirit ? or whether shall “ I flee from thy presence ? If I ascend up into heaven, “ thou art there ; if I make my bed in hell, behold

“ thou art there ; if I take the wings of the morning,
 “ and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea ; even
 “ there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand
 “ shall hold me.*” Here that characteristic, by which
 the immensity of God is distinguished from every finite
 being, is, that he is in heaven and in earth at the same
 time ; consequently, when the same immensity is ap-
 plied to the Holy Ghost, the sacred conclusion is ob-
 vious, that he is God. *From the First Chapter of the*

The two following passages prove the same truth.
 “ There are Three who bear record in heaven, the Fa-
 “ ther, the Word, and the Holy Ghost†.” And Paul
 says unto the Corinthians, “ your body is the temple
 “ of the Holy Ghost, who *is in you*.” Since he is repre-
 sented by the unerring description of inspiration, as
 bearing record in heaven, and dwelling in the faithful,
 in one and the same moment his immensity is fully
 conspicuous. Christ likewise informed his disciples, that
 he would “ pray to the Father, and he shall give you a-
 “ nother comforter, that he may abide with you for
 “ ever ; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world can-
 “ not receive, because it seeth him not, neither know-
 “ eth him ; but ye know him ; for he dwelleth *with*
 “ you, and shall be in you.” Whilst he was present with
 the Father, as to his immediate presence in heaven, he was
 present with his people as to his gracious presence on earth.

But to this it is objected, that the Holy Ghost dwell-
 ing in the faithful, is no more a proof of his omnipre-
 sence, than Satan working in the children of disobedi-
 ence is a proof of his omnipresence.

To this I reply, that it has already been proved, that
 the Holy Ghost is present in heaven and in earth, at

* Psal. cxxxix. 7, 8, 9, 10.

† John vi. 7.

the same moment of time. This, however, is possible to no created being, or the immensity of God could not be proved from his residing both in heaven and on earth at the same time. But it is universally acknowledged, that this is an unquestionable evidence of the supreme divinity of the Father, and why not of the Son and Spirit to whom this immensity is ascribed. Besides, when Satan is represented as operating in the children of disobedience, the meaning is not that any one evil spirit works in all the children of disobedience at once: this is perfectly impossible to any created being. The term Satan, in that passage, is used in a collective sense, expressing a multitude in the singular number. Nay, it is expressive of the whole host of fallen angels. One operating in one child of disobedience, and another in a second, and all eagerly employed about every child of disobedience, in tempting, ensnaring, and seducing. Christ employs the term Satan in the same sense, where he denominates the casting out of Satan in one verse, the casting out of devils in another. In like manner he, who is called an unclean spirit, is also called a legion. Hence Satan's working in the children of disobedience cannot signify, that any one finite spirit operates in all the children of disobedience, or that any finite spirit can reside in a multitude of places at the same time, or that Satan can be present both in hell and on earth. The finite and limited faculties of man, cannot comprehend how spirit occupies space, or precisely determine the manner of its actuating the material body. To determine this, requires a more intimate acquaintance with the nature of spirits, than is attainable in the present embodied state. It is, however, abundantly certain, that it is inconsistent with the nature of a finite spirit, to occupy both heaven and earth at the same time.

This is peculiar to the Supreme Being, and that by which he is distinguished from all created spirits ; and since this is applied to the Holy Ghost, he is certainly a divine person.

The omniscience of the Holy Ghost also proves his supreme divinity.

The nature of things indicate, that the perfection of knowledge is peculiar to God. Created intelligence is limited in all her exertions. Infinite knowledge is the companion of infinite perfection. This knowledge, however, is, in Scripture, ascribed to the Holy Ghost. The foreknowledge of future events, which depend on the free actions of voluntary agents, the God of Israel claims to himself as his peculiar prerogative, by which he is distinguished from all pretended deities. To all these idols, Jehovah says, “ Shew the things that are “ to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are “ gods*.” These words teach, that the knowledge of future events establishes the claim of supreme divinity. The passages, however, are numerous, in which the knowledge of future events is ascribed to the Holy Ghost. He inspired the ancient prophets : “ Prophecy “ came not in the old time by the will of men, but ho-“ ly men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy “ Ghost†.” He likewise inspired the apostles, under the New Testament æra : “ Now the Spirit speaketh “ expressly, that in the latter days, some shall depart “ from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and “ doctrines of devils‡.” The same truth is taught in the following words : “ Behold there was a man at Jerusa-“ lem, whose name was Simeon, and the same was just “ and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and

* Isa. xli. 23.

† 2 Peter, i. 21.

‡ 1 Tim. iv. 1.

" the Holy Ghost was upon him ; and it was revealed
 " to him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see
 " death until he had seen the Lord's Christ*."

Here again it is objected, that the Holy Ghost had his knowledge from the Father and from the Son, in the same manner as the prophets and apostles. In support of this objection, the following words of John are quoted : " When the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide " you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself ; " but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak ; " and he will show you things to come†." The essence of this objection is, that " the Spirit is said not to speak of himself, but to speak the things which he *hears* ; therefore his inferiority is obvious. To this I answer, that when the Holy Ghost is said " not to speak of himself," the meaning cannot be, that he speaks not from his own divine and inherent knowledge, because this would contradict the following declarations concerning the knowledge of the Spirit : " Who hath directed the " Spirit of the Lord, or, being his counsellor, hath taught " him ? With whom took he counsel ; and who instruc- " ted him, and taught him in the path of judgment, " and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the " way of understanding† ?" This forcible interrogatory language teacheth the inherent knowledge of the Spirit, and excludes the possibility of receiving his information through the channel of revelation. Hence, whatever interpretation may be given of the passage in dispute, it must agree with the perfect knowledge of the Holy Ghost, or the Scriptures must contradict themselves, which forms an absurdity in Christian morals. What then is the interpretation of these words ?

* Luke ii. 25.

† John xvi. 13.

‡ Isa. xl. 13, 14

It was formerly mentioned, that the essential perfections of the Godhead were common to all the Three ; and that the perfections exerted by visible actions, which terminate on any creature or thing *without* the Godhead, were the common exertions of the three persons. In this sense, the Holy Ghost, when inspiring the prophets and apostles, and foretelling future events, *speaks not of himself*, but what things he heareth of the Father and the Son. The sacred Three act in perfect harmony, in conveying the knowledge of future events to mortals.

Farther, this expression concerning the Spirit does not infer his derived knowledge, any more than the expression, concerning Christ, " that *he can do nothing of himself*," infers his derived power. " Then answered Jesus, and said unto them, verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do ; for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise*." Here our Saviour interprets these words in the sense I have now given ; even that he can do nothing, separate from, or in opposition, or unconnected, with the Father. " What thing soever the Father doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." These words, instead of denoting inferiority, denote equality ; and since such is the meaning of the phrase, when applied to the Son, what reason can be assigned why it should not have the same meaning when applied to the Spirit ?

Nay, more, there is sufficient evidence in the context to prove, that this is the genuine meaning of the words. The reason assigned, why the Spirit should lead the disciples into all truth, is, that he should not speak of himself, from his own solitary knowledge, but the

* John v, 19.

things which he heard from the Father and the Son, as equally concerned in the resolutions respecting the salvation of men ; or, that he acted in sacred union with the other Persons of the Godhead ; hence his dictates were the infallible certainty of the Three who bear record in heaven. Divine perfections are common to the Three ; omniscience is a divine perfection, therefore common to all the Three.

Again, when the Holy Ghost is said to speak what he *hears*, the meaning cannot be, that he speaks *only* what he is informed by inspiration ; for we have already found perfect and underived knowledge ascribed to him, in the most direct and unqualified sense of language : “ Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord ? Who hath instructed him ? Who taught him knowledge, and showed unto him the way of understanding ? ” Hence, this passage must be interpreted in the same manner as when it is applied to the Father. The Father is frequently represented as *hearing*, and having *heard*, when there is not the least intimation of his having received his information from any other being : “ The Lord said, “ I have surely seen the affliction of my people, who are in Egypt, and have *heard* their cry.” Hence, when hearing is applied to the Father, it indicates the perfection of his knowledge. He was an eye and ear witness. This kind of evidence is the most perfect among men, therefore these words are employed to indicate the infinite perfection of the knowledge of God. The conclusion is also evident, when applied to the Holy Ghost. He speaks not of himself, but what things he hears, as being present, and perfectly acquainted with all the counsels of the Godhead. Hence, this passage, instead of affording an objection to the perfec-

tion of the Spirit, affords a strong evidence to the contrary, and to his supreme equality with the Father and the Son. Rejoice, ye friends of divine truth, that the enemies of revelation can oppose with no weapons, but what may be retorted upon themselves.

The omniscience of the Holy Ghost is also proved by that saying of Paul : " The Spirit searches all things, yea the deep things of God*." Here the evidence is strong and obvious. The infinite knowledge of the Holy Ghost is distinguished from that of any created being, not only by his searching and knowing all things, but also by his searching and knowing even the deep things of God. It must be admitted, that none but God himself can know or search the deep things of God : " Who hath known the mind of the Lord ? Canst thou by searching find out God ? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection ? It is as high as heaven, what canst thou do ? deeper than hell, what canst thou know ?" Here truth is more than victorious ; for it is more difficult to know the deep things of God than even the heart of man. Jehovah here mentions the perfect knowledge of the human heart as his prerogative, and the distinguishing mark of his supreme divinity : " I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins." " For thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men." Hence, if it were proper to use such language, in as far as the mind of God is superior to the mind of man, in so far is the divinity of the Holy Ghost more obvious than even that of the Father. Can an Arian, or a Socinian, blush ? or does he refuse to be ashamed ?

* i. Cor. ii. 10.

I might proceed to show, that the perfections of omnipotence, infinite goodness, holiness, and truth, are, in a most unqualified manner, ascribed to the Holy Ghost; but these will come under review when demonstrating his divinity from the works ascribed to him.

The Sacred Oacles ascribe the works of creation to the Holy Ghost.

In substantiating the divine character of Christ, it was proved, that the work of creation was expressive of divine excellence. Hence, in proving the divinity of the Spirit, by the same argument, I have only to enquire after the existence of the fact; and, if it is revealed in Scriptur , “ what need we any further evidence.” Scarcely have we opened this Sacred Volume, when this truth meets the view. In giving the history of creation, Moses says, that “ the Spirit of God moved upon “ the face of the waters.” The formation of air was part of the work of the second day; therefore, it could not be the air, or wind, which moved upon the face of the waters. The wind could not blow before it existed. It is evident then, that the Spirit, who moved upon the face of the waters, was the third person in the Godhead. It is granted, that this action of the Spirit supposes the existence of the chaos; but the reducing things to their proper order and form, was an exertion of Omnipotence, equal to the formation of all things. Accordingly, we find both actions conjoined and represented as the peculiar works of Jehovah: “ I am the “ Lord, that *maketh* all things; that *stretcheth* out the “ heavens alone; that *spreadeth* abroad the earth by “ myself*.” It follows, that whether it be the work of creation or arrangement, or both, which is here as-

* Isaiah xliv. 24.

cribed to the Holy Ghost, the proof is equally obvious, that He is Jehovah, the true and living God.

That no shadow of doubt, however, may hover over this glorious truth, the work of creation is expressly ascribed to the Spirit. Contemplating the almighty power of the Spirit, the patient Job said, “the Spirit “of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty “hath given me life.” Creation is certainly an unquestionable display of divinity; but the creation of the soul of man is the noblest part of creation, therefore the noblest display of divinity.

The preservation of the world is also ascribed to the power of the Holy Ghost.

Preservation is no less a proof of supreme divinity than creation. The continuation of existence, is the effect of the constant exertion of omnipotence. Rational spirits, and material substances, are no more capable of supporting, than they were of creating themselves. Inspiration, however, ascribes this work to the Holy Ghost: “Thou sendeth forth thy Spirit; they are “created, and thou renewest the face of the earth.” The more strongly to mark the equality of power requisite in the creation, and in the preservation of the universe, the latter is here represented as a creation: “*They are created!*”

The civil and religious government of the world, is also conducted by the Holy Ghost.

It is the Spirit of the Lord, who causeth “his people to rest, and who lifteth up a standard against the “enemy, when he comes in like a flood”. According to various sacred testimonies, it was the Holy Ghost who selected and qualified judges, kings, and governors, in different periods of society. The extensive

revolution which Cyrus effected in the Babylonish empire, by which tyranny was suppreſſed, and the way prepared for rebuilding the temple of Jerusalem, is attributed to the Holy Ghost: “ This is the word of the “ Lord to Jerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by “ power, but by my Spirit saith the Lord of Hosts. “ Who art thou, O great mountain, before Zerubbabel? “ thou shalt become a plain, and he shall bring forth “ the head-stone thereof with shoutings, crying grace, “ grace unto it.” Farther, that beautiful and symbolical representation of divine providence, given in the first chapter of Ezekiel’s prophecy, under the similitude of the living creatures, and the wheels within the wheels, is attributed to the agency of the Spirit. Since, therefore, the government of the church and of the world is conducted by the Holy Ghost, it is abundantly evident, that he is possessed of divine perfection and excellency. The objection brought against this doctrine, that the Spirit is only employed as an instrument, is of the same nature with that brought against the divinity of Christ, from its being said that the worlds were made by him; therefore, the arguments then used in answer to that objection, here apply, and it becomes unnecessary to repeat them. It may, however, be remarked, that it is attended with still greater absurdity, if possible, than as it respects the instrumentality of the Son; because, upon the principles of adversaries, it is an instrument in the hand of an instrument, which involves an absurdity.

The exertions of the Holy Ghost, in the salvation of sinners, also prove that he is the Almighty God.

The more immediate and remote causes of salvation, flow to men through the influences of the Holy Ghost,

"in the demonstration of the Spirit, that the faith He not only inspired the Scriptures, which are of such essential utility in the work of salvation, but he also prepared the apostles for "preaching the unsearchable "riches of Christ." The Holy Ghost said, "separate "me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have "called them*." The elders of the church of Ephesus were set over that flock by the Holy Ghost: "Take "heed, therefore, to yourselves, and to all the flock "over which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers, "to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased "with his own blood†." It is the unquestionable right of God to choose, and to ordain pastors and rulers in his own church. When, therefore, this is attributed to the Holy Ghost, it proves his supreme divinity. God will neither give his glory to another, nor trust such an important work into the hands of a mere creature.

Nay, more, the Holy Ghost appointed the different stations where the apostles were to preach the gospel. This arrangement of the Spirit appeared more evident in the first ages of the church, but not less real *now*, than it was *then*. "The Spirit said unto Philip, go "near, and join thyself to this chariot." Here Philip was commanded, in opposition to all his prejudices as a Jew, to preach the gospel to an Ethiopian, that this stranger to the commonwealth of Israel, might return home, rejoicing in the salvation of the cross, and carry the gospel to his countrymen. On another occasion, Peter was directed to go to preach the gospel to Cornelius and his family. "When Peter thought on the "vision, the Spirit said unto him, behold three men "seek thee; arise, therefore, and go with them; doubt-

* Acts xiii, 2. † Acts xx, 28.

“ ing nothing, for I have sent them*.” The Holy Ghost displayed the same authority, in preventing the apostles sometimes to go where they intended. “ When Paul and his companions had gone through Phrygia, “ and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by “ the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia; and af-“ ter they were come to Mysia, they essayed to go in-“ to Bythinia, but the Spirit suffered them not.” Cer-
tain rules are given in Scripture, to regulate the con-
duct of ministers; and when these are carefully observ-
ed, they may expect the countenance of the Holy Ghost.
May I attempt an answer to the question, What con-
stitutes the call of the Holy Ghost to preach the gos-
pel? A heart renewed by divine grace, an ardent and
pure desire to be instrumental in the salvation of men,
a competent strength of mental faculties, a proper op-
portunity of improving these, by *science* and *erudition*;
the concurring circumstances of Providence, preparing
the individual for a regular appointment, by the proper
ecclesiastical court; and the original desire continuing
and increasing to serve God, in the kingdom of his Son;
such a man, I humbly apprehend, “ may go assuredly,
“ gathering that the Holy Ghost hath bidden him.”
Whither or not this definition of a ministerial call be
accurate, it admits of no doubt, that the Holy Ghost
qualifies all those whom he sends; and, therefore, if the
qualifications are not given, the call doth not exist.

The success of the gospel proves the divinity of the Holy Ghost.

Through his influences, his ministers preach,
“ not with the enticing words of man’s wisdom, but

* Acts x. 19, 20.

“of the churches might not stand in the power of man, “ but the wisdom of God*.” The gospel produces such a change upon the human character, and such effects upon society, that no power, less than divine, could effectuate; therefore, when this is ascribed to the Holy Ghost, it is evident that he is the Almighty God.

The various parts of salvation, are likewise ascribed to the Holy Ghost.

The regenerated are said to be “born of the Spirit, “ born of God, and saved by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.” Hence, the various graces which compose the Christian character are represented as the work of the Spirit. “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” The growth of these graces is likewise ascribed to the Spirit. That same power which created the world, is necessary to its preservation; so, likewise, the same power which produced these virtues, must retain their heavenly quality, and carry them forward to perfection. These different works, performed by the Holy Spirit, prove that he is a divine person.

The religious homage given to the Holy Ghost, also proves his supreme divinity.

On this part of the evidence, it is unnecessary to delineate. All those parts of divine homage, which we have found rendered to the Son, are rendered to the Spirit. He is joined with the Father and the Son, in the solemn ordinance of baptism, in the solemn benedictions of the church, in the different parts of holy invocation, prayer, salutation, thanksgiving, and praise;

* 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5.

and since God alone is the proper object of religious worship, when this worship is given to the Holy Ghost, he is certainly God.

Let all the churches, therefore, venerate the Divine Spirit ; “ give unto him the glory due unto his name ; “ worship before him in the beauty of holiness ; cherish “ his motions ; supplicate his aid, as the spirit of grace “ and supplication ; look to him for all the necessary “ supplies of grace ; trust in his power and glory ; in his “ influences ; and grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, by “ whom ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”

Since the success of the gospel depends upon the blessing of the Divine Spirit, let all who long for the coming and glory of the Redeemer’s kingdom, be earnest in their supplications to the Spirit of grace.

Ye children of affliction and of sorrow, repair to him in the hour of adversity ; he is the Great Comforter of the oppressed and forlorn ; and “ the prayer “ of the destitute he will certainly regard.” “ Glory “ be to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is “ now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.”

LECTURE IX.

Character of Man.

GEN. ii, 7. “*And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life ; and man became a living soul.*”

THE human mind traces with keen avidity, and dwells with fascinating pleasure upon the scenes of antiquity ; —the origin, the progress, the elevation, and the decline of empires and of kingdoms ; —the various revolutions which have convulsed nations, and the means which produced these great changes ; —the manners and customs which each revolution has produced ; —the moral effect which these have had upon particular nations, and upon mankind in general ; —the characters of such as have made an illustrious figure, either as statemen, legislators, or heroes.—And in proportion as the reader is personally interested, so will his curiosity or pleasure be increased.

This lecture will direct the attention to a scene both ancient and interesting ; —to the origin of the human race, and to the domestic history of the first man, and the contrast between his formation and that of the other creatures : —the contrast between his rational superiority, and their brutal inferiority ; —nay, between his own pri-

meval glory, and his fallen degradation,—will afford both instructive, and melancholy information to all his posterity.

The venerable volume of antiquity informs us, that after God had created and arranged the various parts of the universe, a consultation of the persons of the Godhead was held, concerning the formation of man. “And God said, let *us* make man in *our* image, and “after *our* likeness; so *God* created man in his own “image; in the image of God created he him, male “and female created he them.” Such is the simple, but majestic account, transmitted to his posterity, concerning the formation of man.

In this formation, was included a most regular temperature of body.

Formed by the immediate hand of Omnipotence, the body of man displayed the most beautiful proportion, and enjoyed the most regular temperature. The perfection of strength and wisdom centered in the Godhead, and these were exerted in the formation of Adam. What *these* chose to effect, was then conferred upon him: nor were the seeds of mortality then sown in the human frame. No poisonous or destructive quality was infused into any surrounding substances: no pestilential blast contaminated that atmosphere: then all nature teemed with comfort, and administered joy and health: all the members of the body were the active instruments of righteousness: then the body formed no impediment to the mind, but cheerfully co-operated, in all the acts of religious adoration and obedience. Adam was formed to have dominion, and to represent his Maker in this lower world; therefore, in

the formation, and in the strength of his body, his original destination was pourtrayed.

Created after the image of God, man was also endowed with the most consummate perfection of mind.

The sacred historian informs us, that “ the Lord God “ formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed “ into his nostrils the breath of life ; and man became “ a living soul.” Life vegetative, in common with the vegetable world ; life sensative, in common with the animal creation ; and life rational, peculiar to himself, were conferred upon man. This historical fact affords the following argument. Every fountain sendeth forth streams of its own quality : the soul of man proceeded from God, and as he is infinitely perfect and holy, so was the soul of man when first created. The perfection of derived and created excellence was then in the possession of man : then he approached divine excellence as near as possible, for a dependent and rational being : all the emotions, and feelings of his soul, exerted their native vigour, in contemplating the nature of God, and the quality of his works : then all the ravishing beauties of creation beamed upon the the mind ; the captivating charms of truth, and all the lines and discriminations of evidence, were full in view. The understanding was constantly employed, in the contemplation of the wonderful perfections of God ; and, from hence, learned what was good, and great, and excellent : what are all the pleasures of science and of erudition, compared to those of Eden ?

In the days of innocence also, the intentions of man were pure, and he was inclined to do that which was altogether just and right.

Perfect dispositions cannot produce unrighteous conduct, no more than depraved dispositions can produce good actions. The soul of man was then uncorrupted, and unstained with defect; therefore, he walked in the ways of righteousness, without turning aside, either to the right hand, or to the left. "He that doeth righteousness, is righteous, even as our Father, who is "in heaven, is righteous." Then no impure thought impelled the mind to wander from the path of duty: then no unhallowed guest profaned the temple of the Holy Ghost; all the powers and faculties of the soul, revered and adored the Majesty of heaven and of earth: then God's will was instantly obeyed: no reluctant movement retarded the springs of action; the soul delighted itself in God, and loved him as the supreme good: then immediate communion with God was experienced, in all its celestial perfection; man enjoyed an uninterrupted sunshine of tranquillity, and of illumination: then all creation bloomed in luxurious grandeur, and raised the soul to the great Creator: then, man " beholding the glory of the Lord, was "changed into the same image, from glory to glory," from one stage of intellectual improvement unto another; from one degree of happiness unto another; and the more he admired, discovered, and loved, the more was his resemblance to divine purity.

It appears, that the doctrine of the Trinity was not unknown to Adam in a state of innocence.

To perfect the human understanding, it is essentially necessary, that it have proper conceptions of the nature and perfections of God. Nay, the man worships an unknown God, who doth not worship the true God, as subsisting in Three persons; he who re-

presents God to himself, in any other point of view, doth not represent the true God, but an idol of his own imagination. In the following words concerning Adam, Epiphanius appears to have had the same argument in view : “ Adam was no idolater, for he knew God, the “ Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost ; and he “ was a prophet, and knew that the Father said to “ the Son, let us make man.” The history of creation also proves this fact. “ In the beginning God created the “ heaven and the earth,—the spirit of God moved upon “ the face of the waters ;—and God said, let us make “ man in our image.” In as far, then, as Adam was informed of the history of creation, he was acquainted with this doctrine. It appears, therefore, inconsistent with the perfection of his knowledge, to suppose that he was ignorant of the nature of the true God. If his degenerate offspring are favoured with this knowledge, can we suppose that Adam, in a state of perfection, was destitute of it ? To this purpose speaks Basil, who says, “ take particular notice of the words, *let us make man.* “ This word, used plurally, hints at the persons of the “ Godhead, and presents a Trinity to our knowledge ; “ the knowledge of it is *coeval* with the creation ; nor “ should it seem strange, that afterwards it should be “ taught, since it is one of those things, of which men- “ tion is made in the very first creation.”

It is granted, that the mere natural exertion of Adam’s mental faculties could not discover this mystery ; but many things were revealed, which he could not explore by the natural exertions of his mind. Of this number was his own creation, and the materials of which his body was formed, the nature and quality of the food which was proper for his use ; the constitu-

tion of the tree of knowledge of good and evil ; and the formation of his wife. Of these things he acquired the knowledge by supernatural aid ; and why not also of the doctrine of the Trinity ?

The Fathers of the church were in general of opinion, that God appeared to Adam in a visible form, and conversed familiarly with his favoured one. Hence, says Zanchius, “ Christ is therefore that Jehovah who “ took Adam and placed him in Paradise, and spoke “ to him. I humbly apprehend, that the meaning of “ the words, *let us make man* in our image, and in our “ likeness, implies, that the image and likeness of God “ consists in the spiritual and immortal nature of man, “ and in the faculties of understanding, and will and “ affections ; principally in the endowments of the “ soul, knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, in the “ immortality of his destination, and in his dominion “ over the creatures. Upon the first, the image of “ God was delineated ; the second was that very image “ itself, and the resemblance of the Godhead. And “ the third, the lustre of that image widely diffused “ over the whole man, and adorning every faculty of “ his mind, and member of his body, and rendering “ him the lord and head of the new formed world, and “ also immortal, in consequence of his being the friend “ of God, and destined to be his eternal companion.”

The principal features of this image of God upon the soul of man, appear to have been known to the great Plato, who says, “ the flight from evil, is an assimilation to God, as far as may be : and this assimilation “ is *justice* and *piety*, accompanied with *prudence*.” May we conclude, that he saw the description of Paul,

who represents the image of God as consisting in *knowledge, righteousness, and holiness*?

The perfection of Adam in a state of innocence, also implies, that he was qualified to retain his original purity.

The perfection of the divine nature, after which he was formed; the perfection of his own faculties, and the easy nature of the command enjoined, obviously imply this truth. Hence, his criminality in lifting up the hand of rebellion appears the more conspicuous.

The Creator having finished his works, pronounced them "very good, and blessed the seventh day, and "sanctified it, because that in it he had rested from all "his works." After this, God placed man in the garden of Eden, the fairest and most fertile spot of the earth, stored with all kinds of pleasant trees, "and "good for food." To perfect the felicity of Adam, "the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon him, "and took one of his ribs, of which he made a wo- "man," for a companion to him. Enjoying this profusion of happiness, and that crowned with conjugal bliss, the first human pair flourished in all the perfections of created glory; when, lo! a singular command issued from the celestial throne; "and the Lord "God commanded the man, saying, of every tree of "the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree "of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not "eat of it; for in the day thou eatest thereof, thou "shalt surely die." Such is the brief and simple account of the first moral injunction of God upon man.

This has obtained various appellations among men. One divine has termed it the covenant of works; another, the covenant of nature; and a third, the co-

tenant of the law. If I mistake not, however, this is one of the many injuries resulting from attempting to define words, which, in the page of the historian, are so simple, that they admit of no definition. It is universally granted, that these words contain the origin of the *moral injunction*; accordingly, the reason for giving that injunction, these appellations must be found there, or it does not legally exist. The narrative of Moses does not contain these terms; the only remaining enquiry, therefore, is, whether these originate from a proper definition of the terms used by Moses? The use of a definition is to explain, in plainer and simpler language, a word which is complex or varied in its signification. This rule is sanctioned upon logical principles, therefore the surest method of terminating this dispute is, to listen to the definition usually given to a covenant, in order to ascertain whether or not it is a proper definition of the term used by the sacred historian.

The covenant of works, says the celebrated Witsius, is “ an agreement between God and Adam, formed “ after the image of God, and the head and chief of “ all mankind, by which God promised eternal life and “ happiness to him, if he yielded the most perfect obe-“ dience to all his commands; subjoining a threatening “ of death, if he transgressed in the least point; and “ Adam accepted of this condition*.” The more common definition of a covenant is, that it is “ a mutual “ agreement between two parties, upon certain express-“ ed conditions.” Now, I ask, if either the one or the other forms a definition of the word *commandment* used by Moses? The radical design of defining is, to

* Wits. Econ. Fed. vol. i. c. ii. p.

render the principal words and phrases in a sentence more plain and obvious. This, however, cannot be pretended in the present case, for this definition of a covenant forms no rational definition of the simple words of the historian. Nor ought any man to surrender his judgment to any favourite term, although long employed by men of eminence. Neither let the reader for one moment indulge the thought, that I question the existence of the fact, although I question the accuracy of the word or term by which it has frequently been expressed.

The safest method of procedure, in the present instance, is, to consider the simple narrative of Moses, and to interpret the terms found in it, according to the common received rules of sacred interpretation ; “ *And the Lord God commanded the man.*” A *command* is the expression of the will of a superior to an inferior. Here the *superior* is the Lord God. The *Lord*, a name expressive of eternal duration, necessary existence, absolute independence, and universal dominion. The name *God* is plural in the original ; and, whilst it is expressive of divine perfection, it plainly indicates the doctrine of the Trinity. The *inferior* here referred to is *the man*. The man, by way of eminence, so highly honoured, as to be formed after the image of God : the *only* man then living : the man from whom all the human race have descended : the man, because the noblest part of God’s works, composed in a wonderful manner of matter, and mind, and the appointed representative of God in this lower world. Such is the *superior* and the *inferior* mentioned by Moses.

Let us next examine the nature of the command itself. “ The Lord God commanded the man, saying,

“of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat.” These words imply, that the fruit of the garden was destined for the support of man,—convey a right to man to use that fruit, and indicate, that the trees of the garden were then loaded with ripe fruit. The birth of the world appears to have been in Autumn, in the time of ripe fruits. The words do not refer to a future but a present time, “Of *every* tree of the garden thou *mayest* freely eat.” The man whom God formed, had an animal life to support, and food was necessary for that purpose. Nor was Adam to pass his days in indolent inactivity; an indolent can never be a happy life; Adam was “to keep and to “dress” the garden, whose delicious fruits were to load his table. It will indeed be granted, that his employment was rather a pleasure than a toil, but still he was to taste of the pleasant sweets of industry. Farther, in the whole of this command, the constant dependence of man upon the bounty of his Maker, is clearly taught.

The command under consideration was likewise connected with a prohibition, “But of the tree, of the “knowledge of good and evil, *thou shalt not eat of it.*” It is difficult to ascertain, whether this tree was specifically different from the other trees, and so called, in consequence of some natural inherent quality. The following reasons lead to the conclusion, that this name was rather appropriated to that tree, in a symbolical manner; First, because God intended, by that tree, to prove and try man, whether he would yield implicit obedience to his will. In this sense, God is said to have “tried Hezekiah, that he might know all that “was in his heart.” A second reason may be discover-

ed, because, that if man, moved by love to his Creator, should obey this law of probation, he would then attain the utmost perfection of permanent *good*; but if he rebelled, he would experience the unknown, and unfelt pains and sorrows of *evil*. A third reason may be discovered, why this tree was called the tree of “ the “ knowledge of good and evil,” because that man was by this to *know*, that God was the sovereign proprietor of all things, and that the creature had no right, without his permission, to any blessing, whether temporal or spiritual; and farther, that he was still to look forward, to a state of more perfect felicity, since *one tree* was denied.

Without penetrating farther into this matter, let us enquire into the meaning of the prohibition, “ *thou shalt not eat of it.*” To understand this subject with sufficient accuracy, it may be proper to remark, that the commands of God are of two kinds, moral and positive. A *moral* command results from the divine perfections of God, and the relative situation in which man stands to God, as a rational creature. A *positive* command is that which depends upon the will of God. Creation gives a right to dominion. God has created all things, therefore he is the Sovereign Lord of nature, and his will is law in every instance. Hence the positive law originates from the moral. The divine and moral right of God, lays the foundation of positive injunction. The command concerning “ the tree of the “ knowledge of good and evil,” was positive, but, at the same time, founded in the natural relation subsisting between God as the creator, and man as his creature. Creation demands obedience. In no moment of his existence, was man “ without law to God.” It is

evident, however, in the nature of things, that man could not be bound to obey the command of God, concerning this tree, before it was enjoined. Nor would the natural obligation upon Adam, to adore and serve his Creator, have been diminished, although such a command had never issued from the celestial throne. In fine, moral precepts are founded in divine perfections ; and positive commands result from divine pleasure. Hence, the mournful conclusion is obvious, that Adam, by disobeying the positive law, also violated the moral law, and despised the moral perfections of God, and contradicted his sovereign pleasure. Nay, more, he not only contemned divine excellence, but likewise did violence to the moral principles of the divine image, after which he was originally formed.

Some divines have wandered so far in the field of conjecture, as to enquire, what would have been the nature of Adam's felicity, had he retained his original purity? Human genius is always degraded, when it spends its strength in the region of conjecture. There are facts sufficient in number, both in the natural and moral world, to employ the human powers, without spending their strength upon that which cannot profit. Hence, since Adam did not retain his original innocence, and since there is no recorded evidence what would have been his situation if he had done so, the wisest line of conduct is, to speak with great reserve upon this subject. It may be sufficient to remark, that the nature of man, as a dependent creature, seems to indicate, that his continuance under this restriction would only have been for a season ; and that when the days of his probation were ended, he would have passed into a state of confirmed felicity and glory.

This positive command was also enforced, by an awful threatening.

The same power which confers a right to command, likewise confers a right to threaten. Hence we hear the Lord God saying to Adam, “ for in the day thou “ eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.” The nature of this sad penalty is best illustrated by its melancholy effects. Concerning this part of our subject, there remains no conjecture, but all is mournful certainty. The fact has happened; therefore we may investigate its nature, quality, and consequences. The length of time in which Adam retained his original innocence is not recorded; therefore vain curiosity ought to be repressed. I am of opinion, however, that the time was much longer than is generally supposed. It will be readily granted, that we have only brief hints given by the sacred historian concerning the transactions of the first ages, and likewise concerning the events of Eden, consequently, the mind ought to rest satisfied with the information given, until the coming period, when Adam will relate the facts of his history, in the land of perfect felicity, to his descendants.

One thing is certain, that whether that period was longer or shorter than is generally supposed, man was then perfectly happy, and that in conjugal felicity the first pair passed their days, until one fatal moment, when Eve, wandering through the bowers of Eden *alone*, was addressed by the prince of fallen angels, in the form of a serpent. Sacred History teaches, that “ in the un-“ measured duration of existence, previous to the crea-“ tion of the world, a race of rational, intelligent, and “ glorious beings were formed, to execute the pleasure, “ and to celebrate the excellence of their Creator. That

" this heavenly race witnessed the making of the earth,
 " and the fields, and the highest part of the dust of the
 " world ; the preparing of the heavens, the original
 " springing of the deep, the establishing of the clouds,
 " and the settling of the mountains ; and that then, all
 " the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of
 " God shouted for joy, in all the sweets of celestial me-
 " lody, and in all the vigour of newly created strength,
 " they resounded the praises of the eternal, and cele-
 " brated the natal hour of creation." However, previous
 to the period now before us, " a sad disaster happen-
 " ed among that tribe, and one superior to the rest, in
 " splendour and power, swollen with malignity, or e-
 " lated with pride, contended with divine excellence."
 " And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels
 " fought, and the dragon and his angels." " The king
 " of heaven prevailed, and he and his associates were
 " tumbled from their seats of splendour, and reserved
 " in chains under darkness, until the judgment of the
 " great day." *

Filled with indignation at the felicity of man, and
 malignity against God, the chief of the vanquished
 angels sought the degradation of man. Possessed of
 power, beyond what the human mind can properly
 understand, and permitted of God, he assumed the
 appearance of a serpent, and addressed Eve in human
 language. " Amazed at this, and captivated with his
 " insinuating address, she listened to hear what would
 " follow. The forbidden tree becomes the subject of
 " conversation. The sacred historian thus relates the
 " commencement of his attack ; ' Now the serpent was
 " more subtle than any beast of the field, which the
 " Lord God had made, and he said unto the woman,

* See my Sacred Biog. p. 32—32.

" " yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of
 " " the garden ? Sly, base, and iniquitous insinuation.
 " Here is the origin of all slander, and here also are
 " contained its prominent features. Truth is always
 " plain, bold, distinct, and determinate; but falsehood
 " is ambiguous, timid, inaccurate, and insinuating.
 " Slander insinuates what it dares not plainly assert,
 " and therefore obtains a hearing and circulation, which
 " otherwise it would not. Slander would never fail
 " to suffer death, the moment of its first appearance,
 " were it not covered with the semblance of truth, and
 " sheltered under the wing of subtile insinuation. Un-
 " der the sarcastic smile and hypocritical sigh, slander
 " is fostered ; and, by the malicious glance of the mur-
 " derous eye, it is sent abroad into the world, to wound,
 " and ruin, and destroy.

" Had the serpent, at the beginning, used plain and
 " determinate language, he would have discovered his
 " real character, and deterred Eve from entering into
 " conversation with him. But, with soothing strains,
 " and a flattering tongue, he seemed kindly to enquire
 " if God had imposed any limitation on human bless.
 " Perhaps also, Eve might, from the voice and lan-
 " guage of the serpent, suppose that he was of another
 " rational tribe, religiously enquiring concerning the
 " divine will, in order to do it. If so, unsuspecting of
 " any danger, in the benevolence of her mind, she hastened
 " to impart the knowledge she had received concern-
 " ing the divine commandment. Sadly, however, was
 " her benevolence repaid by the first of liars, and the
 " father of slander.

" The contrast between the lying slanderous insinua-
 " tion of the serpent, and the candid honest language

" of Eve, is singularly striking, and proves the acci-
 " racy of the former remarks. To his false insinuations
 " she replied, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the
 " ' garden, but of the fruit of the tree which is in the
 " ' midst of the garden, God hath said, ye shall not
 " ' eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.'
 " This language bears internal marks of truth, by its
 " plain and artless dress. If it is criminal to slander
 " and reproach, it is also criminal to listen to it; for
 " giving ear to slander, renders it tenfold bolder: The
 " serpent first insinuated against divine goodness, but
 " now he proceedeth to contradict divine veracity.
 " And the serpent said unto the woman, *Ye shall not*
 " *surely die!* Eve might formerly be mistaken, but
 " now it was evident he was a vile slanderer. They
 " who listen to hear the goodness of God arraigned,
 " will soon listen, with the same criminal silence, to
 " hear his truth called in question. They who give
 " heed to lying vanities, forsake their own mercies.
 " Eve listened to the serpent, and he became more
 " daring: God, said he, doth know, that in the day
 " ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and
 " ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil*." Fa-
 tal success, and the dire effects were suddenly expe-
 rienced: " And when the woman saw that the tree
 " was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the
 " eyes, and a tree to be desired, to make one wise,
 " she took of the fruit thereof, and *did eat.*" The
 first bending of the heart towards guilt, was a violation
 of the divine law, but now the nefarious work is done.
 Now the serpent exults with all the malignant pleasure
 of his envious mind.

* See my Sacred Biog. p. 39—41.

It is a singular fact, however, that the historian makes no mention of any effect having been produced, upon the mind of Eve, upon *her* eating of the tree. But no sooner had she given to her husband, and he had eaten, than instant remorse and shame entered their guilty minds. Then, the command was disobeyed, and human ruin completed. Then, “ by *one* man’s “ *disobedience*, sin entered into the world, and death “ by sin, and so death passed upon all men.” Then mankind fell under the righteous sentence of condemnation, in all its dread reality and extent. Then the human frame became subject to mortality and disease. The human *understanding* became darkened, and the knowledge of man was exchanged for ignorance. The *will* became criminally perverse and refractory. Then, instead of cheerfully obeying it, constantly opposed the will of God. The *affections*, the great springs of action in the human mind, instead of delighting themselves in God, as the center of all felicity, became estranged from God, and turned to seek happiness in criminal indulgences.

In that moment the command was *disobeyed*, life and all its comforts were forfeited. Hence, the threatening runs, “ in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt “ surely die.” In the day a criminal is sentenced, or his guilt discovered, he is in common language called a *dead* man. The equity and certainty of his death are obvious. Hence, the threatening annexed to this command included the certainty of the punishment in case of disobedience, and, also, that the punishment would *immediately* follow upon the transgression. Upon the first transgression, the punishment commenced, although it was not *then* perfected.

In the following expressions of Scripture, one or both of these ideas are contained. "The righteousness of the righteous, shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression." "The wicked shall not fall in the day he turneth from his wickedness; neither shall the righteous live in the day that he sinneth; but for his iniquity that he commiteth, he shall die for it." In these different passages, the *certainty* and the commencement of the punishment are indicated, but not its full execution.

There is another passage of Scripture, where the language is still more similar to that of the threatening under consideration. Among the first acts of the reign of Solomon, he retaliated some of the injuries done to his father, and unto Shimei the Benjamite, who on a certain day cursed his father, "with a grieveous curse," he said, "build thee an house in Jerusalem, and dwell there, and go not hence any whither; for it shall be, that on the day thou goest out, and passest over the brook Kidron, thou shalt know for certain, that thou shalt surely die; thy blood shall be upon thine own head." The moment that man passed the boundaries of Jerusalem, he was, in the eye of the royal threatening, a dead man; although in the nature of the thing, some time behoved to intervene, before the sentence could be executed. This passage strongly elucidates the threatening annexed to the command in Paradise. In the moment Adam sinned, he was doomed to certain punishment, and his soul actually experienced a *moral* death, and his body became liable to disease and death. "In the favour of God life lies;" but man then lost the favour of God, so became *morally* dead. Dead to the enjoyment of God's favour, and to the

love and practice of holiness. Then the mind became estranged from God, and, instead of delighting in him, dreaded his approach, and fled from his presence. Hence we are informed, that " Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God, among the trees of the garden." Sad change, in the conduct and feelings of man ! He who formerly found his chief felicity in the fellowship and converse of his Maker, now became so alienated in his affections, that he could not endure his presence. But Eden was the destined abode of comfort and of peace, therefore, when enmity entered the mind of Adam, he was no longer happy in that delightful region.

Now, the ruin of man seemed complete, and the Serpent waited in anxious expectation, to receive him as his prey, to drag along to the regions of misery. But mercy triumphed over guilt, and God revealed salvation. Here, again, I shall beg leave to quote the sentiments expressed in my Sacred Biography. " The Lord God interrogated the offenders concerning their " criminal conduct. The man charged his sin upon " God himself, and upon the woman. The woman " whom *thou gavest* to be with me, *she gave* me of the " tree, and I did eat." The woman again charges her " guilt upon the serpent ; and the woman said, the serpent beguiled me, and I did eat The charging of " guilt upon others, will not excuse the criminal. Nor " can any species of excuse remove the guilt of the " plain and positive violation of the law of God. Sin " cannot pass unpunished. The judge of all the earth " must do right. Justice and judgment are always the " habitation of his throne. Therefore, the serpent " found, that his new transgression involved him in

“ new plagues, and exposed him to increased torments. “ His violent and guileful dealing returned upon his own “ head. And the Lord God said unto the serpent, be- “ cause thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all “ cattle, and above every beast of the field ; upon thy “ belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat, all the “ days of thy life ; and I will put enmity between thee “ and the woman, and between thy seed and *her* seed ; “ it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his “ heel. The human nature of the seed of the woman “ was to be bruised, but, through death, he was to de- “ stroy him that had the power of death, that is the “ devil. The cruelty, deceit, and malice of the ser- “ pent, could not pass unpunished ; therefore, when he “ expected to have dragged Adam and Eve at the “ chariot wheels of his triumphant car, to the place of “ misery, as the evidences of his victory, to his indo- “ lent and timid associates, behold a new and severe “ punishment descends upon his head. Of these three “ offenders now before the Judge, he was the first in the “ transgression, and he is first sentenced to punishment. “ Surely it shall be ill with the wicked, and he shall “ eat of the fruit of his own ways, and he shall be fill- “ ed with his own devices. Omnipotent power can in- “ crease any degree of punishment, or wretchedness. For- “ merly, the serpent was doomed to unalleviated anguish, “ but now his head was to be bruised. It added in expres- “ sible torment to the serpent to hear, even in his own “ sentence, the salvation of man proclaimed. A second “ disappointment, therefore, with increased pain, was “ the fruit of his malicious adventure.”

The direful effects were suddenly experienced, in in the expulsion of our first parents from Paradise, and subjecting them to all the pains and sorrows included

in the curse pronounced upon them. In consequence of human nature being contaminated, every man *now* comes into the world with a mind inclined to every species of transgression. The root being corrupted, so must the branches. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an "unclean? no not one." Hence mankind, in every region and in every situation, have displayed evident signs of corruption and depravity.

To this also accords the testimony of Scripture, which declares that the "whole world lieth in wickedness. " That there is none righteous, no not one. That by "one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; " and so death passed upon all men, for that all "have sinned. Man is also described as going astray "as soon as born, and the imaginations of his heart only "evil, and that continually." In fine, the uniform conduct of man in every age, demonstrates that he is ushered into the world with a heart base, corrupted, and vile. Facts are stubborn arguments, and against them there is no evidence; therefore, it is truly afflicting, that so many should be found, who either in whole or in part deny the doctrine of original sin. That man was originally holy is readily granted, but that he is now wholly guilty is equally certain. Now "the gold is become dim, and the most fine gold is changed. Woe "unto man, for he has sinned; how is the mighty fallen!" Sadly is the image of God defaced, and all the powers of the soul enfeebled. Blessed, however, be the name of the Lord, that he has not for ever abandoned his offspring, but provided happiness and relief, through the obedience and atonement of his own Son. To contemplate the character and wonderful person of that Mediator, shall be the subject of the next lecture.

LECTURE X.

Character of Christ the Mediator.

1 TIM. ii. 5. “*There is one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*”

THE delineation of character is an useful kind of composition. It informs the present concerning the conduct of past generations: and, as human nature is the same in every age, it teaches the most forcible lesson both of prudence and of piety. In order to raise the human character to the highest perfection, it teaches what to imitate and what to shun, in a great variety of situations and circumstances.

In as far, however, as divine exceeds human excellence, so far does Christ’s character excel that of every other. In no character does such generosity, sensibility, benevolence, and utility, shine forth. “In all things the “pre-eminence belongs to him.” In him all divine and human virtues center. The glories of his Godhead have already been considered; and it is only his character as Mediator which is now to be delineated.

The sacred oracles clearly reveal that Christ is “both “God and man in one person.” Hence it is said, that “the word was made flesh, and dealt among us.”— That, “he was made in the likeness of man, and was “found in fashion as a man.”—That “there is one Me-

“ diator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.” He is likewise called “ Immanuel, God with us.” These passages amount to a full proof of his real humanity. The essential parts of human nature are body and soul ; and the history of the conception, birth, life, and death of Christ, proves that he was partaker of both. It may however enlarge our idea concerning the constitution of Christ’s person, to enumerate the following facts.

The human nature of Christ was not a distinct person from the divine nature.

The soul and body of man only constitute one person ; so likewise the two natures of Jesus only constituted one person. The human nature of Christ never had a separate existence of itself. It commenced its existence when united to the second person of the Godhead. The personality of Christ was in his *divine*, and not in his human nature. Jesus existed from eternity, a distinct person in the Godhead. When he became the Son of man, he assumed human nature, but not a human person. The two natures of Christ however are not blended. Two things may be united, yet remain perfectly distinct. There is an infinite difference between divinity and humanity ; nor can that difference be diminished. The human nature cannot be changed into the divine, nor can the divine be changed into the human. The peculiar properties of each nature continue the same, nevertheless of the union ; and the divine nature admits of no change : but all the change which was effected by the union took place upon the human nature.

Farther, that which may be affirmed of either nature, may be affirmed of the person of Christ. He was both God and man. He was both in heaven and on earth at

the same moment. He was visible in heaven, as to his divine nature, and he was visible on earth, as to his human. Hence it is written of him, "No man hath ascended up into heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, who *is in heaven*." Jesus died as man, but he could not die as God: yet, in consequence of the union of the two natures, the blood which he shed upon the cross, is called the blood of God. Hence Paul admonished the elders of Ephesus, saying, "Feed the church of God which he hath pur-chased with *his own blood*." Christ is unchangeable with respect to his divine nature, but as to his human, "he increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man." Christ is omniscient as to his divine nature; but as man, he knew not the day of judgment. Many other instances might be given of the same kind, concerning the complex person of Christ.

Man is also a complex person, composed of body and mind; and what may be affirmed of either, may be affirmed of the person of man. Man is both mortal and immortal; mortal as to his body, but immortal as to his mind. Man both dies and lives: he dies as to his body, but cannot die as to his soul. In this view, the same person may be said to be dead, and yet alive. At the same time, what is true concerning the body, is not so respecting the mind. The body has figure and shape, has dimensions, and is divisible; but the mind has none of these characteristics. These things may aid our conception of the complex person of our Lord; but the manner of the union between his divine and human nature cannot be fully understood. The powers of man are too limited to describe the manner of the union between the soul and body, far less between the divine and human nature.

The Arians, however, in attempting to defend themselves against those passages which describe the existence of Christ before the creation of the world, confidently assert, “that *the soul*, which was united to his body in the incarnation of Christ, did not then begin to exist, but is “the first creature that was made; and is the greatest “and most exalted of all creatures, and, in this sense, is “the first-born of every creature, and the beginning of “the creation of God.” That this pre-existent soul made “the world, and had the government of it, in some “degree, previous to his incarnation. That this soul is “the Word who was made flesh and dwelt among men “by taking a body in the womb of the Virgin Mary, “and being born of her.” Hence they add, that “this “glorious *Creature*, who was greater and more honour-“able than the angels, and placed far above them in “the most dignified station, and made in a sense a god, “and appeared in the form of God, yet being neverthe-“less a *mere creature*, made himself of no reputation, “and took upon him the form of a servant.”

In reply to these sentiments, I shall first examine two passages of Scripture in which the Arians chiefly glory; and then, by a few arguments, proceed to prove, that such sentiments are contrary to Scripture, and of a ruinous tendency. Since by inspiration every sentiment, concerning the nature, character, and work, of the Redeemer, must be proved, let us first listen to her celestial voice. In Christ’s address to the Laodicean church, he denominates himself “the Beginning of the creation “of God.” That is, say the Arians, “the first creature “who was created by God.” The obvious and natural construction of these words however express no such idea. It is an indisputable moral maxim, that no truth can

contradict another truth. The eternal existence of Christ is a certain revealed truth, therefore it cannot be contradicted by any other revealed truth ; consequently, the interpretation of this passage must correspond with that sentiment. Christ existed before the formation of any creature or thing ; he is the Lord of creation, and head of all things ; he *began* and finished the work of creation, therefore no language could more concisely express all this complex work, and this complex honour, than to reveal himself as “ the Beginning of the creation of God.” “ All things were created by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.” It is not said, that he was the beginning of all *the creatures of God*, but the Beginning of the *creation of God*. *The creation of God!* Was God created ? no more was Jesus the first created being. Can the idea of creation apply to God as it applies to man ? This expression is one of the strongest which language can afford to describe divine excellence.

It is pleasing to remark, that no radical truth is expressed in any phrase, but the same is sufficiently supported by evidence, either contained in the connection of the passage itself, or in the argument, or narrative, or address, carrying on by the sacred writer. Such is the fact here. For the divinity of Christ is not only taught by the phrase under consideration, but it is confirmed and elucidated by the general strain of the address to the Laodicean church. The knowledge of the human heart and character forms a decisive proof of supreme divinity : hence Jesus immediately adds, “ I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot, “ that thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with good, “ and have need of nothing ; and knowest not that thou

“ art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, “ and naked.” With the same divine majesty, he proceeds, in metaphorical language, to represent himself as the Almighty *One*, who had the blessings of salvation to dispense ; who was invested with authority to *rebuke*, and power to *chasten*, nay, with a right to call them to repent, in order to enjoy present communion and future glory. Are not these demonstrative proofs of supreme divinity ? Nay more ; what stronger mark of supreme divinity, than to have actual possession of the throne of glory, and to have a right to dispose of it to victorious believers ? Hear then the royal declaration of Jesus : “ To him that overcometh will *I grant* to sit “ with me in *my throne* ; even as I overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.” It is farther found, that Jesus repeatedly says of himself, in the book of Revelation, “ I am *Alpha* and *Omega* ; I am the *Beginning* and the *End*, the *First* and the *Last* :” by which expression it is not certainly meant, that he *began to exist*, or that he was the *first* of all creatures : but even that he existed *without beginning*, and that his existence shall know no end, and that he is the Author, the Creator, and the Beginner of all things. Nay, it is abundantly evident, that the whole tenor of the book of Revelation, and the general strain of language which runs through the book, not only prove the supreme divinity of Christ, but also, that the Scripture speaks with divine accuracy, in denominating this part of the sacred volume, “ the *Revelation of Jesus Christ*.”

The next passage, in which the Arians so vainly glory, runs thus, “ who is the image of the invisible God,

“ the first-born of every creature ;” “ this say they, means “ that the soul of Christ was the first creature who was “ formed. Upon enquiry, however, the contrary will be found true. This assertion concerning Christ, forms what logicians call one complex proposition. In this complex proposition, there is only one subject or person mentioned ; even God’s dear Son, so denominated in the context. There are two things predicated or declared concerning him ; even that he is the invisible God, and that he is the first-born of every creature. Since, therefore, both these things are predicated or declared of one person, they must in the nature of things correspond.

What then is the obvious meaning of the first of these, predicates, that Christ “ is the image of the invisible God.” It is a well-known fact, that this language is never applied to any created being. Angels, the most dignified order of created beings, never receive this appellation. Man, the most noble of the creatures of God here below, is said to have been created “ after the image and in the likeness of God ;” but in no instance is he called the image of the invisible God. Man, in his conversion, is likewise said to be “ renewed in “ knowledge, after the image of him that created him :” yet even these words, however strong, do not teach that he is “ the image of the invisible God.” It is easy to understand what is meant by the image, the likeness, or the picture of a man, even the resemblance of the original, or a display of what it *is* or *was* ; but no perfect or adequate image, or representation, can be formed of him, who is “ the invisible God, whom no man hath seen at any time, or can see.” God is a spirit, and totally destitute of bodily parts, which can either be re-

represented or pourtrayed. The language, therefore, which the Apostle uses, represents the equality of Jesus with the invisible God. An image, or picture, represents the likeness of a person to those who never saw him; so Christ represented the invisible God on earth, to those who never saw him: hence called his image, and also denominated, "Immanuel, God in human nature, God manifested in the flesh." And it is said, that "the Word was made flesh, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Nay, he is called the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person." These passages afford celestial evidence, that Christ is "the image of the invisible God," because equal in every perfection, and likewise in *invisibility*. "*The image of the invisible God.*"

Farther, it is not said, that he *was*, or that he will *become* the image of God, but that he *is* the image of the invisible God, teaching his eternal and permanent equality with God. Hence, it is evident, that supreme divinity is applied to Christ in the first predicate of this complex proposition. According to common sense and every logical rule, however, the other predicate, which refers to the same person, must contain the same truth, or these predicates would contradict each other, and, instead of forming a distinct intelligent proposition, in which some information was conveyed to the mind, they would form a compound of incoherent contradiction. Upon this principal, I might rest the consequences of the meaning of the second predicate; but so ample is the evidence of Christ's divinity, that I can with confidence proceed to the investigation of the other predicate. Here then when it is said, that Christ is "the first-

“born of every creature,” it does not imply that the soul of Christ was the first created being. For Scripture never expresseth creation by the phrase *being born*; nor is this the natural and usual import of the term. There exists a more natural, consistent, and rational interpretation of this sacred declaration concerning Christ, that he is “the first-born of every creature.”

In ancient, as well as modern times, the first-born was greatly dignified above the rest of the children: next to the Father, he was the King, Ruler, and Priest in the family. Hence, the first-born had the pre-eminence in every family, and was in a distinguished sense the *heir*. Corresponding to this fact, we hear Jacob addressing his first-born in the following words: “Reuben, thou art my *first-born*, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power*.” These dignified privileges gave the first-born a right to the paternal blessing, and to a double portion. In this respect Esau was legal heir to his father’s blessing, and the pre-eminence above Jacob, the youngest son.

Again, the first-born among the children of Israel were devoted to the Lord, as his peculiar property, and, therefore, “counted worthy of double honour.” In the dignified family of Aaron, his first-born succeeded him; and the first-born in every royal family was heir to the throne. Alluding to these facts, God said unto the haughty king of Egypt, “Israel is my son, even my first-born.” And again, he says, “I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first born.” Referring to the same facts, the redeemed of the Lord are also denominated, “an holy nation, a royal priest-

* Gen. lix. 3.

“ hood,” a peculiar people, a chosen generation, and called the “ church of the first-born, who are written “ in heaven.” It will readily be granted, that these expressions do not teach, that these different persons, to whom they refer, were the first who were created. Unquestionably not. The fact is, that they teach a priority of *dignity*, and not a priority of *existence*.—A pre-eminence, and not a pre-existence. And in this sense, it is predicated of Christ, that he should have the pre-eminence. Hence the royal Psalmist introduceth God the Father, as saying concerning him, “ I “ will make him my *first-born*, *higher* than the kings “ of the earth *;” not my first-born created before the kings of the earth, but my first-born, *higher* than the kings of the earth. Nor is it said, he *was* my first-born by being the first of creatures, but *I will make* him my first-born. Unite all these sentiments into one proposition, and it will evidently appear, that Christ is the first-born of every creature, because the highest, the most dignified, the most honourable, the heir of all things, the King of kings, and the lord of Lords, and a Priest, not after the order of Aaron, but after the order of Melchizedeck. Not in the order of lineal descent, as the high priests under the law, but by the immediate and extraordinary call of God, as was the fact with Melchizedeck, who was immediately and supernaturally called of God to be the priest of the Most High God, amidst that idolatrous generation.

Here, again, we find the remark formerly made, realized in its fullest extent ; for there is sufficient internal evidence, in the argument of the Apostle, to support the interpretation now given. In the words which

* Psal. lxxxix. 27.

immediately follow the proposition under consideration, Paul asserts of Christ, that “ by him were all things created, that are in heaven, that are in earth, visible and invisible, all things were created by him, and for him.” When, therefore, it is asserted in the strongest language, that he created all things, it follows, upon the principles of our opponents, that he created himself. This however is both impossible and absurd: but to this absurdity does the doctrine of the Arians lead them; for, if Christ created all things, and if he is the first created being, then it follows, that he created himself. Can an Arian blush? Mourning over his perverseness and infatuation, let the churches bend to the authority of inspiration, and listen to the sum of Paul’s argument in this place: the faithful, says he, are delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son; in whom they have redemption through his blood; and he is so completely qualified for this arduous work, that he is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature, the Creator of all things; for he was before all things, and he is the Preserver of all things, for by him all things consist. Nay, that he is the Supreme Lord of the church, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. To all which, it may be added, that Paul, writing to the Roman church, denominates Christ “ the first-born among many brethren.” Having examined these two passages, in which the Arians so *unjustly* glory, I shall now proceed to mention a few arguments tending to confirm the doctrine under consideration.

The pre-existence of Christ’s soul, before his formation in the womb of the Virgin Mary, is inconsistent with his real humanity.

It is sufficiently evident, that the Sacred Oracles teach, in the strongest manner, that Christ was, in every respect, a partaker of human nature. The constituent parts of human nature, however, are body and soul. The union of body and soul are necessary to the formation of man. A body *alone* cannot constitute a man; no more can a soul *alone*; but it is the union of the two. Nor does inspiration in the least insinuate, that the soul, which is joined to the body to form man, has any separate existence before its union, or that one soul may be removed from one body to another, and when it has dropped one, may assume another. Divine wisdom has fixed a determinate rule concerning the formation of every race of beings. The angelic nature has its own peculiar properties, distinct both from the divine and human nature; and so likewise has the human nature its own peculiar properties, distinct both from the divine and the angelic. Nay, every species of animals have their own peculiar properties, and constituent qualities, which distinguish them from all others, and which compose the essentials of their nature. Since, therefore, there are certain determinate properties peculiar to every created nature, these must be enjoyed before the creature ranks among that race. The angelic nature cannot become human, neither can the human become angelic.

Correspondent to this reasoning, a distinction is stated in Scripture between these two natures. “ Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, “ he also himself likewise took part of the same. For “ verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but “ he took upon him the seed of Abraham.” *Flesh and blood* are here expressive of human nature, and of the

same Christ took part. He assumed human nature in its usual form, and no other. To mark this the more strongly, it is added, “ verily he took not on him the “ nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham.” Had Christ taken upon him the nature of angels, he would have done so in its ordinary form, and he would have been an angel; and when he took upon him human nature, he became partaker thereof as the children. The children of men, whom he came to save, had not a superangelic nature; and as the Scriptures assert, that “ in *all* things it behoved him to be made like unto his “ brethren,” consequently the idea of the Arians, concerning the pre-existent soul of Christ, appears inconsistent with the nature of things, and with his true humanity.

The pre-existence of Christ’s soul is inconsistent with the repeated declaration of Scripture, that he was the son of Mary.

Mary and Elizabeth are both said to have conceived a son; and as the union of soul and body was necessary to form John, the son of Elizabeth, so likewise to form Jesus, the son of Mary. God is the *efficient* cause of the formation of both soul and body; and these are only ushered into existence by an established law of nature: parents are the instrumental cause, but God is the efficient cause. That Jesus, however, might be “ an offering without blemish, and without spot,” and that he might be totally free of sin, he was conceived in a supernatural manner. Hence said the angel unto his mother, “ the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the “ power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; and that “ *Holy Thing* which shall be born of thee shall be called “ the Son of the Highest.” Now it is obvious, that

these words are destitute of meaning, and the reasoning conclusive, if the soul of Christ “existed, a mighty, “a glorious, and a dignified creature, thousands of years “before this period.” The conception here ascribed to “the power of the Highest,” could be nothing more than the conception of a body which was never once supposed to constitute a son.

The doctrine of the *pre-existence* of Christ’s soul also saps the foundation of the Christian system. The positive divinity of Christ, and his real humanity, are the two pillars upon which the whole superstructure of redemption rest. If he was not *divine*, he was not qualified to make atonement; and if he was not *human*, he had not *somewhat to offer*. Remove these two pillars, and both the possibility and the reality of the atonement embrace the ground. Farther, this idea of the pre-existence of Christ’s soul was originally intended to support the denial of his divinity; and certainly this intention sufficiently proves, that it proceeded from the father of lies. In the history of the church, it has also been found, that all those who have adopted this idea have been hostile to the other fundamental doctrines of revelation. This fact tends to corroborate what has been asserted, that the idea of the pre-existent soul of Christ saps the very foundation of the Christian system.

The pre-existence of Christ’s soul is also inconsistent with the usual principles of moral government.

God is one, and his moral procedure is uniform. He addresses his moral offspring, saying, “I am the Lord, “and I change not.” It appears however to constitute one of the general laws of his divine government, to place moral agents in a state of trial and probation, that their submission, obedience, and fidelity, may be prov-

ed, before their advancement to the highest places of dignity and honour. Adam was placed in a state of probation in Eden. The honourable and dignified among men pass in general through many hardships, and undergo a course of severe discipline before they arrive at the elevation of dignity and honour. Can any thing be more equitable, than that probation and trial should precede honour and reward? What reason then can be assigned why the pre-existent soul of Christ, which is only a mere creature, should be *immediately* exalted above all other creatures, without the least previous trial or probation? Before this idea can be admitted, the Arian must present some stronger reasons to convince the human mind, than he has as yet been able to produce. But the Scripture account of the conduct of God towards the Mediator is perfectly reconcilable to the usual mode of his divine government. His human nature began to exist at his incarnation: he "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour both with God and man;" his life was a continued course of trial, obedience, temptation, persecution, suffering, and fidelity. "Though he "was a son, yet learned he obedience by the things "which he suffered." The natural and usual gradation is distinctly described by the apostle, in the following words. "Jesus humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." In exact correspondence with this view of the moral government of

God, Christ said unto his disciples, after his resurrection, “ all power is given unto me, in heaven and in “ earth.”

The *pre-existence* of Christ’s soul has likewise been denied by the Church, from the days of the Apostles. Not that the testimony of men is implicitly to be received in matters of religion, but it may safely be received to a certain extent. Consulting the history of the church, it will then be found, that the most famed for learning, piety, and wisdom, have maintained a contrary doctrine. Nor does it appear, that they experienced any difficulty, in giving a just and consistent interpretation of the sacred oracles, whilst, at the same time, they maintained this doctrine.

Finishing this important subject, it may be remarked, that the assuming of human nature by Christ, was a divine, and not a human act. Hence, it is said, that “ he took our nature upon him;” that he “ came to “ to lay down his life;” and that he “ gave himself a “ sacrifice and an offering, of a sweet-smelling savour “ to God.” In that condescending act, he did not lay aside his glory, or degrade his dignity. He was no less divine that he became human; nor is he any less divine, now that his human nature is exalted to the throne of Glory. The circumstances attending that act, were part of his humiliation, but the action itself was wholly divine.

The *eternal Sonship* of Christ is next to be defended. When war becomes domestic, it becomes more interesting. In the defence of this truth, we have not to contend with foreign enemies, but with the Anabaptists and others, who strenuously support and propagate a different doctrine, even among ourselves. Hence,

the illustration and defence of the eternal Sonship of Christ, becomes the *present duty* of all those who "are set for the defence of truth."

The eternal Sonship of Christ is fully substantiated by sacred evidence.

No species of evidence can rise superior to the testimony of God. Infinite truth is essential to his nature, therefore he cannot emit a false or imperfect testimony. Hear, then, his unerring evidence*. "Who "hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who "hath gathered the winds into his fists? who hath "bound the waters in a garment? who hath establish- "ed all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and "what is his *Son's name*, if thou canst tell?" The name of any being is expressive of his nature, and also distinguisheth him from all other beings. But "who "can by searching find out God," or describe the import of his name, or delineate the perfections of his nature. The same difficulty, however, attends the name of his Son; therefore he is equal in duration and excellence. The work here mentioned is the work of creation; therefore the Son of God existed before the creation of the world. In the nature of things, no being can act before he exists; but since the work of creation is here ascribed to the Son, it is abundantly evident, that his existence is eternal.

Imposed upon by his partiality to his own theory, an Anabaptist writer appears to mistake the meaning of this passage. After quoting the words, he says†, "Here it "is supposed, that these questions are affirmative of the "power and wisdom of God, whose Son is here mention-

* Proverbs, xxx. 4.

† M'Lean on the Sonship of Christ, vol. iii. p. 289.

“ ed : but this is *a mistake*.” A mistake ! How ? Are not the binding of the winds in his fists, the binding of the waters in a garment, and the establishing of all the ends of the earth, works which are expressive both of the wisdom and of the power of God ? He adds, “ these questions *relate* to men, and imply a strong denial “ that any man can do these things.” I am at a loss to perceive what is meant by the words, *relate to men* : if the author means, that these questions are put to men, then I perceive his meaning ; and his words will accord with the interpretation I have given, that these questions are expressive of the unequalled power and wisdom of God, and of his Son, who existed when he performed these works. Indeed the same idea appears to have dropped from his own pen, who concludes his remarks upon this passage in these words, “ But God and his “ Son can do all these things, therefore no questions “ can be put respecting them.” May not men justly speak both in a negative and an affirmative manner concerning the works of God ? And is it not a well-known fact, that such interrogatories are used in Scripture to denote the strongest certainty. A few instances may be mentioned. “ Who hath directed the Spirit of the “ Lord ? Who hath known the mind of the Lord ? Of “ how much sorcer punishment suppose ye shall they be “ thought worthy, who have trodden under foot the “ Son of God ? How shall we escape if we neglect so “ great a salvation.” Hence it is obvious, that by the interrogations, what is his name, and what is his Son’s name ? the positive existence and equality of both are asserted. The words do not refer to a future period, but speak of what *was then* : “ What is his name, and his “ Son’s name ?”

The reality of Christ's eternal Sonship is also taught in the second psalm, where David introduceth the *Anointed One* as saying, "I will declare the decree; the "Lord hath said unto me, thou art *my Son*, this *day* "have I begotten thee." The Anabaptist writer formerly quoted adopts a short method of explaining this text, by asserting, that "the apostles explain this psalm as a "prophecy of Christ's sufferings, resurrection, and his "following glory and dominion, so that the only question that remains, is this, whether the apostles or the "modern interpreters are most to be credited*." In similar language I may ask, whether the apostles or that author have the best claim to credit. Certainly that author might have condescended to give some reasons to support his conclusions, and adduced some Scripture evidence, before he put such a bold question to the Christian world. What if it should be proved that the apostles spoke no such sentiments as he ascribed to them?

In determining this matter, there are two questions to be answered. *What saith the Holy Ghost, by David, in the passage under consideration? And what saith he, by the apostles, in the passages to which that author refers?*

In reply to the first question, I apprehend, that, instead of the second psalm being "a prophecy of Christ's "suffering, and his following glory and dominion," this sacred hymn is partly *historical* and partly *proprietorial*. It relates the rage, plotting, and consulting of the kings of the earth, against the person and the work of Christ, together with his infinite superiority, and that of his Father, which actually came to pass at that

* Vol. iii. p. 287.

time. Hence, the Lord says, “ yet *have I set* my king “ upon my holy hill of Zion.” Unquestionably, this is not a prophesy concerning what would come to pass, but a positive assertion concerning what the Lord had actually *done.*” “ *I have set* my king upon my holy “ hill.” Then David introduceth the anointed himself, saying, in the words under review, “ I will de-“ clare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, thou “ art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.” The language is strictly historical. *Thou art*, and *thou art in this day*, are expressions which describe what then existed, and not what was to come to pass about a thousand years after. What, then, is meant by the words, “ thou art my Son *this day?*” Should the Anabaptist say, that they refer to the time of David, this will not serve his cause, since he asserts, that “ Christ only became the Son of God when he assum-“ ed human nature.” It is equally absurd to refer them to any future period. When was it heard, that the phrase “ *this day,*” denotes a future time? Nor let it be said, that it may as properly denote a future period, as eternal existence. Eternity, it is granted, excludes the idea of succession, in one respect; but our feeble powers can only grasp the mighty idea, in a partial manner. In the mind of God, however, all is *this day.* Is not the existence of the decree, and of this day, of the same date? but the decrees of God are all eternal; hence, *this day*, in this place, is expressive of eternity. When, therefore, God says, “ thou art my “ Son, this day have I begotten thee,” he bears witness to his eternal Sonship.

In consequence of the poverty of language, the sacred writers are constrained to apply the language

current among men, when speaking of the divine Three. There are two ideas implied, in the relation subsisting between Father and Son: that the Father is prior and superior to the Son, and that the Son is of the same nature with the Father. It would be both absurd and derogatory, to conceive of God according to the manner of men, in respect of the first idea. The ideas of priority or inferiority are entirely excluded; only, that of equality is retained, and meant to be expressed by these terms, when applied to the first and second person of the Godhead. And, that the mind may not be led into any mistake, the truth is sufficiently guarded by other expressions. Hence, God is called "the "everlasting Father." There can be no father without a son; therefore, an everlasting Father implies an everlasting Son. Nay, so careful is the Holy Ghost to guard the mind against any profane or absurd conceptions, that Christ himself is called *the everlasting Father* *." Who ever once supposed, that when eyes, hands, feet, and other bodily parts, are ascribed to God in Scripture, that he is composed of bodily parts, such as the sons of men? Such language is only employed, in accommodation to human frailty. Neither are the names of father and of son to be analized according to their common interpretation, when applied to the first and second persons of the Godhead. Nay, every idea of derivation, or priority, or inferiority, is entirely excluded.

The second question suggested, in replying to the Anabaptist writer, was, " *What saith the Apostles, when they speak of this passage, and apply it to Christ?* To this I reply, that Christ himself here says, " I will de-

* *Isaiah ix. 6.*

“*clare* the decree.” When? Certainly at some future period. But when was declaration of the eternal decree? It was made in a particular and special manner at his resurrection; hence the writer of the Acts quotes these words, when speaking of the resurrection of Christ, in order to mark their accomplishment*. I am supported in this interpretation by Paul, who, speaking of Christ, uses these memorable words. “Concerning *his Son* Jesus Christ, our Lord, who was made of “the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared “to be the Son of God, with power according to the “spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” It merits particular attention with what care he useth the Old Testament word, “I will *declare* the decree.” Christ was *declared* to be the Son of God, by his resurrection from the dead.

The other passage, where Paul applies the words of David to prove Christ’s destination to his priesthood, instead of militating against it, affords a strong argument in favour of his eternal Sonship. Will my oponent assert, that the decree and purpose of God, concerning the destination of Christ to his Priestly office, only took place at his incarnation? “Know unto God “are all his works from the beginning.” Paul here compares the priestly character of Christ and Aaron, in order to prove the superiority of the former. A legal appointment was the first thing essentially necessary in the character of a high-priest. “No man taketh “his honour unto himself, but he that was called of “God, as was Aaron.” But our Lord was not of the tribe of Levi, but of Judah, “of whom the Lord spoke “nothing concerning priesthood;” therefore it was ne-

* Acts iv 25.—29. and 13.—33.

cessary to prove his right in another manner. Aaron was called of God, and the priesthood, by a lineal descent fixed in his family: but Christ did not derive his right in this way, but by the immediate call of God, in the same manner as Melchisedeck. This extraordinary priest had neither predecessor nor successor in his priestly character; so also Christ, who was the only high-priest of the Christian church. Neither did he arrogantly assume this office, without a legal call. "Christ glorified not himself to be made an high-priest," but he was made so by him, who from eternity "said unto him, thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee." The date of his priestly office was eternal, and so likewise his Sonship. This is strongly confirmed by the address of the Father to the Son. "Unto the Son he saith, thy throne, O God, is for *ever* and *ever*." Can words more strongly express the eternal Sonship of Christ? can the evidence of God the Father be called in question? and does not he declare, that his throne is for *ever and ever*. Uniting all these arguments, may I not then ask, in language similar to that used by the writer already quoted, "Whether the Apostles, or the modern defender of the Anabaptists, are worthy of most credit?" Bold questions, and strong assertions, too often pass for solid arguments, and authentic evidence.

But, before leaving the consideration of the second psalm, it may be proper to remark, that it contains another strong evidence of the Sonship of Christ. The words are, "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way; when his wrath is kindled but a little, blessed are all they that put their trust in him." Will Mr M'Lean pretend to say that these words are pro-

phetical? Are not the judges of the earth commanded *then*, even in David's time, affectionately to revere and submit to the Son? Do not these words enjoin a present duty upon these earthly rulers? These words farther describe the blessedness of all them who trust in him. But would inspiration invite any to trust in one who did not *then exist*, but who was to *become the Son of God* about a thousand years after? To give such an interpretation is certainly trifling with the word of God. Nay, more, would the Holy Ghost celebrate the blessedness of those who trust in the Son, unless this was a name peculiar to him as God, and not as man? God alone is the object of religious trust: Hence it is written, "Cursed be "the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his "arm; whose heart departeth from the living God." In short, the obvious meaning of the words is, that they contain the appointment of a present duty to the judges of the earth *then* living towards the *Son of God*, who *then* also existed, and was, in consequence of his supreme divinity, entitled to religious homage and trust.

The name Son is also expressive of his highest excellence and divine glory

Divine excellence alone is intitled to religious adoration. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him "only shalt thou serve." In many passages of Scripture, however, this religious homage is given to the Son. "When he bringeth his First-begotten into the world, "he saith, and let all the angels of God worship him.— "Doest thou believe on the Son of God? And he wor- "shipped him."

The name Son is also expressive of his *equality* with the Father. A father and a son are always of the same nature. Every idea of *deriving*, or *receiving*, or having

communicated, is excluded in *positive equality*. They therefore speak incorrectly, who maintain the equality of Christ with the Father, and yet admit that he derives *personality* from him. The personality of Christ is in his divine and not in his human nature; therefore, to say that he derived personality, is, in other words, to say that he derived divinity, which is absurd in the extreme. It is afflicting however to find that some of our most eminent divines have fallen into this mistake. The great Dr Owen says, “ that *whatever* belongs unto the “ person of the Son, as the person of the Son he *re-* “ *ceives* it all from the Father by eternal generation.— “ All the properties of the divine nature are communi- “ cated unto him, together with personality, from the “ Father.—Thus he receives, as his *personality*, all di- “ vine excellencies from the Father*.” It is too obvi- ous, that these expressions are not only inaccurate, but also teach a very different doctrine from what Dr Owen ever *intended*. Mr Gib, in his view of the covenant of grace, has adopted the same mistake. “ The eternal “ generation of the Son of God,” says he, “ doth not at “ all mean his deriving Godhead from the Father; it on- “ ly means a deriving of *personality* from him in the “ same Godhead.—Though he is not the Son of himself, “ but of the Father, yet he is God of himself.” These great men seem to have fallen into these gross mistakes, from misunderstanding the true import of the terms, *Son*, *generation*, and *begotten*, when applied to the Persons of the Godhead. They are only employed to express the perfect equality of these Two in as far as mortals can understand; but every idea of derivation, or priority, or inferiority, is excluded by the inherent, and

* Owen on the person of Christ, chap. 5.

eternal, and divine equality of the Persons concerning whom they are used. As I have formerly remarked, the poverty of language, the imbecility of the human powers, and the mysterious nature of the subject, render such expressions necessary.

From the whole of this chain of thought, and Scripture evidence, may I not infer, that the Anabaptist writer frequently referred to is greatly mistaken, when he says, that Christ “is called the Son of God, on account of his incarnation, or assumption of the human nature into personal union with the divine.—That he is called the Son of God, on account of his being begotten from the dead, appointed heir of all things, having all power in heaven and in earth vested in him;” and after he has reasoned at considerable length, he concludes, that “the amount of the whole is, that Christ is the Son of God, as the Word made flesh,—as the First-born from the dead,—and as the Father’s heir in the kingdom and inheritance.”

Who is the Father’s *heir* in the kingdom and inheritance? It must be him who is heir of all things. But to this very Person, Son, or Heir, the Father said, “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.” But farther, if Christ only became the Son of God when he assumed human nature, when, I pray, did he become the *Son of man*? Are these designations of the same import, or are they different? If the Word became the Son of God by his incarnation, when, it may be asked, did he become the *Son of man*? The sentiments of these men appear to draw consequences after them, which in the judgment of charity I wish not to ascribe unto them. A favourite system will often betray the best of men, and the strongest minds, into error. For I humbly ap-

prehend, that the plain Scriptural view of the Sonship of Christ is, that he is the eternal Son of God, perfectly and divinely equal with the Father, and that the same was declared by the exertion of his Almighty power in raising himself from the dead, and ascending up to the right hand of the Father, where he is invested with all power, and dominion, and glory, " being the Father's Son and Heir in the kingdom and inheritance."

LECTURE XI.

The Work of Reconciliation.

GAL. iii. 13. “*Christ hath Redeemed us from the curse of the Law, by being made a curse for us.*

THE human mind is both delighted and improved by contemplating the general activity of intelligent beings. The whole creation displays increasing activity. All heaven is in constant motion, celebrating the praise, or performing the pleasure of the Eternal. The inhabitants of that celestial region, “rest not day nor “night, in giving glory to God, and to the Lamb.” The Sun, the Moon, and the Stars, together with the various planits in their different orbs, are constantly in motion, to “declare the glory of the Lord, and to “show forth his handy-work.” Revolving seasons also participate of the general activity, and “day unto day “uttereth speech, and night unto night teacheth “knowledge.”

The various tribes of earth are likewise keenly employed in their Maker’s work.

In the general mass of being, there is a certain determinate portion of exertion, and of labour, necessary to support and conduct the vast system; and God distributes to every nation, and society, and individual,

according to his sovereign pleasure. Some are destined to move in a low sphere, and to perform a small portion of the general labour. Others are placed in elevated stations, and have a large portion of work appropriated to them. Some display such activity, and perform such a large portion, as attracts the attention both of the present and future generations: whilst others display so little activity, and perform so small a portion of the general labour, that they almost live unknown, and die unremembered. But the extensive work appropriated to Christ; the fidelity and activity with which he performed that work, together with its beneficial effects upon the general system of being, far exceed all others.

Infinite wisdom always confers abilities proportioned to the destined work. Those who are appointed to perform a small portion of the general labour, have a small proportion of mental strength conferred; but those who are appointed to perform extensive and important services, are favoured with powers equivalent to the service. The work of Jesus being unequalled, so were his abilities. Mental qualifications, and their improvement, usually form the great character. In forming the character of Christ, the best of endowments were favoured with the best of teachers. During the unmeasured space of eternity, the Son was under the instruction of the Father. The wisdom, the knowledge, and the united perfections of the Father, were employed in the education of the Mediator. Hence, said Jesus, by the spirit of prophecy " he hath given me the tongue " of the learned, that I should know how to speak a " word unto them who are weary." And during his abode among men, he said, " what I have heard and

“ learned with my Father, I have made known unto you.”

But, as the work of Christ was unequalled, so were his *miraculous* gifts. “ Every good and perfect gift is “ from above.” The ancient priests and kings were anointed with oil, as symbolical of their receiving supernatural endowments, corresponding to their respective stations ; and, alluding to this fact, Christ is said to have been “ anointed with the oil of gladness above “ his fellows”— above all the priests or kings which were before him, and above all the apostles and ministers which follow after him. Referring also to this unequalled anointing of Christ, it is said, that “ he giveth “ not the spirit by measure unto him.” In this unequalled effusion of the spirit, was fulfilled the prediction of the prophet ; “ and there shall come forth a “ stem out of the root of Jesse, and a branch shall grow “ out of his roots ; and the spirit of the Lord shall rest “ upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, “ the spirit of counsel and of might, the spirit of know- “ ledge and of the fear of the Lord ; and he shall not “ judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after “ the hearing of his ears : but with righteousness shall “ he judge the poor, and reprove with equity, for the “ meek of the earth ; and he shall smite the earth with “ the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips “ shall he slay the wicked.” From such a person, endowed with such abilities, and enjoying such advantages, what may not be expected ?

When the mind reflects upon the union of the divine and human nature in the person of Christ, it is filled with surprise, to hear of the gradual improvement of his human faculties ; but, in this, we behold the re-

gularity of the divine procedure respecting every partaker of created intelligence. In the whole circle of exertion, certain means are necessary to the obtaining of certain ends. Certain means are necessary to the acquisition of knowledge; and even these means were employed, in preparing Christ for his mediatorial work. These means are either common, or supernatural. When the common are not enjoyed, the supernatural are necessary. In the infancy of Christianity, when circumstances prevented from enjoying the actual means, miraculous gifts were conferred; but these circumstances no longer existing, they presumtuously err, who venture on the work of public teaching, without having used the necessary means to acquire knowledge. These would do well to remember, that such was not the case with Jesus, who was prepared both by the Father, and by the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost. This leads to remark—

That, in the work of reconciliation, Christ was the Father's *Servant*.

Sustaining the honours of the injured Godhead, the Father, in the character of judge, is represented in Scripture as receiving the satisfaction of Christ in the room of the faithful. In this character, he appointed Christ to his redeeming work. Hence, says Christ, “I was “set up from everlasting.” In the character of the Lord's servant, he delighted to do the will of God, and his “law was within his heart;” it was as his “meat and “drink to do the will of him that sent him, and to “finish his work.” In doing this work, he *taught* the doctrine of his Father. He gave new and enlarged views of the divine perfections, of the divine law, and likewise enforced moral precepts by new sanctions.

“ He preached righteousness in the great congregation.” Hence it was remarked of him, that never man spake like this man; for he “ taught with authority, and not “ as did the Scribes.”

In his own conduct, he displayed the obedience and submission of a servant, for, in his blameless life, purity and fidelity were uniformly displayed. The most upright man, that ever breathed the vital air, in some unguarded hour, has stained his character with guilt; but Jesus was perfectly “ holy and harmless, and separated from sin.” His enemies being the judges, none could convict him of sin. Nay, Satan himself, that lying and malicious spirit, was constrained to exclaim, “ I know thee who thou art, the *Holy One* of God.”

The obedience of Christ was of a public nature in behalf of his people.

It has been said, that “ the human nature of Christ, “ being a creature, owed obedience to God, in virtue “ of its creation.” That “ obedience to the natural law “ was due by the man Christ, by a natural tie. “ That Christ was indeed a creature, but holy under “ the covenant of works for himself.” And “ that “ Christ is under the law, as a rule of holiness for “ ever.” However respectable the men who have adopted these opinions, they are exceedingly erroneous.

It will be granted, that obedience to the natural law is incumbent upon every human person; but the human *nature* of Christ did not constitute a human *person*. It never existed, *a separate, rational, and responsible agent, without the divine nature*. Upon the principles both of reason and revelation, his *human nature* having never constituted a *human person*; it was supernatural, and consequently could not be subject to any *natural tie*.

The man Christ was under the 'moral law, but he was formed by the union of the two natures, and not by human nature, separately, or alone. Moral agents only are capable of responsibility; but as the human nature of Christ never constituted a moral agent, it could not, in the nature of things, be subject to moral obligation.

If Christ obeyed the law, as a private person for himself, then that kind of obedience must either have been in whole or in part. If it was *in whole*, then Christ only obeyed for himself, and not for his people: If it was *in part*, then the time of discrimination must be fixed between his *private* and *public* obedience. This however appears impossible, for, if obedience was due from him for *himself*, that obedience must be complete. All the obedience that he could give was due to the law. No obedience less than perfect can satisfy the divine law. Hence it follows, either that the obedience of Christ was *wholly* of a public nature, in behalf of his children, or they can receive no benefit from the *example* of perfect integrity displayed in his holy life.

The miracles which Jesus wrought were also of a public nature.

Hence, said Christ, "I came not to do mine own will, " but the will of him that sent me. The works which "my Father gave me to do, the same bear witness of me." These works not only displayed the divinity of his character and mission, but likewise his ability to save "even "to the uttermost."

The sufferings of Christ however constitute the chief part of the work of reconciliation.

The law required from innocent man only a continuance in obedience, but from sinful man it required both that obedience which was originally due, and

also punishment for the offence committed. Hence, in accomplishing the salvation of his chosen, Jesus had both to yield that obedience, and to endure that punishment. As his obedience was perfect, so his sufferings were severe. During the whole course of his life he experienced neglect, oppression, and sorrow. He endured the insults of the vulgar, the virulent reproaches of the powerful and opulent, and the most exquisite suffering both of body and mind. His suffering did not commence with the agonies of the cross, but, from his birth to his death, he "was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."

Man is composed of body and soul; and both are the active instruments of sin; therefore, it became necessary that the substitute of sinners should suffer both in his soul and body. The history of Christ proves that this actually came to pass in him.

Farther, the soul of man is the chief agent in every transgression. However sudden the transition from the yielding of the thought to the commission of the action, it will be found, that the body never commits a criminal action without the consent and direction of the mind. Nay, the body is only the instrument in the hand of the mind to commit the nefarious action. Hence it follows, that the soul is the most criminal, and therefore deserves the severest punishment. In the equity of God, therefore, the severest punishment behoved to be inflicted upon the soul of Christ, when he was substituted in the room of sinners. The history of Christ's sufferings accords with this reasoning. Often we read of Christ being vexed and grieved in mind; and when the hour approached, he "began to be amazed, and to be very heavy;" and in agony of mind

he exclaimed, saying, “ my soul is exceeding sorrowful “ even unto death : and being in an agony, his sweat “ was as it were great drops of blood falling down to “ the ground.” Then was the hour and power of darkness, when the Father poured into his righteous soul those bitter dregs of vengeance which were due to the elect, as the just punishment of their guilt. As the scene of atonement advanced, the mental sufferings of Jesus were increased : therefore his mind was grieved with the shameful desertion of his disciples, with the insults and maltreatment of enemies, of whom it is written, they “ mocked him, and smote him : and when “ they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face ; they did spit in his face, and buffeted him : and “ others smote him with the palms of their hands.” The desertion of his Father on the cross augmented his cup of suffering to the full. Then, in that awful hour, when enduring the unspeakable pains of body, he also endured the keenest agonies of soul, therefore he “ cried, “ with a loud voice, saying, my God, my God, why “ hast thou forsaken me.” Now was the moment when he made his soul an offering for sin ; now he made atonement by the agony and sorrow of his spotless soul : and at last, having “ tasted the vinegar, he said it was “ finished, and gave up the ghost.

Now, all the predictions which went before concerning him were realised. Now the sacrifices, which represented his *one* sacrifice, were rendered significant. Now the promises of God were fulfilled, and the faithfulness of God conspicuous. Now the law was magnified, and all the divine perfections honoured. The law of God is like its author, holy, just, and good. It is an eternal and unalterable rule of righteousness, ren-

dered immutable by the rectitude of the Divine Governor. This law essentially implies a sanction proportioned to the specific demerit of the sinner. Nor must this punishment be either more or less than the guilt deserves. Hence, both the equity of the punishment and the nature of the divine law prove that every sin amounts to an infinite evil.—Infinite in respect of the person against whom the offence is committed, although the criminal be only a finite creature. The perfection of Christ's sufferings, however, made a complete atonement for this accumulated offence ; therefore Jesus said on the cross, “ it is finished.”

Sacrifices appear to have been of divine appointment, and intended to prefigure and set forth the sacrifice of Christ. The legal sacrifices, in their very nature, indicated and taught the substitution of Jesus in the room of his people. When the Israelite brought his offering to the door of the congregation, and laid his hand upon the head of the victim, confessing his sins over it, he was clearly taught their symbolical transfer, by faith to look to the promised Messiah, who was, in the end of the world, to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

In a particular manner, the lamb in the Jewish pass-over, prefigured Christ, “ the Lamb of God, who tak-“ eth away the sin of the world.” That Lamb was chosen of God, so was Christ. It was separated from the flock on the tenth day, and kept until the fourteenth day at even ; so Christ was separated from among the people in the purpose of God, and kept in the promises from the days of Adam until the evening of the world, when “ he came to put away sin by the sacrifice

“ of himself.” It was a lamb of the first year ; so Christ was crucified in the strength of manhood. It was without blemish, and without spot, so Christ was “ holy, “ and harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.” It was roasted on the fire ; so Christ endured the fierceness of the Father’s wrath. It was the ordinance of God for the salvation of Israel ; so Christ is the ordinance of God for the salvation of all nations. The sprinkling of its blood saved Israel from the sword of the destroying angel ; so the blood of Christ, sprinkled upon the conscience, saves from the wrath to come. All Israel were commanded to keep the passover, so all men are commanded to believe in the name of Christ for the remission of sins. “ Christ our passover is sacrificed “ for us.”

It has been said, how hath Christ endured the *full* punishment of the redeemed, since his punishments were not eternal ? To this I answer, Jesus completely satisfied divine justice, therefore there was no necessity that they should be eternal. In consequence of the union of the divine and human nature of Christ in one person, he was qualified to endure the whole weight of merited vengeance. He emptied the cup of retribution.

It has also been said, in the punishment of sin there is a delivering over to *the power of sin* : but this was not the fact with respect to Christ, therefore, there was a deficiency in his punishment. To this it is answered, that the *quantity* of punishment, and not the particular kind, was all that the law required. Nay, the same afflictions and punishments do not overtake every sinner, even in this world.

It is farther asked, was it *just* in God to punish the *innocent* in place of the guilty ? Christ, though innocent,

willingly undertook to suffer for his chosen, therefore divine equity was glorified by the suffering inflicted upon him in the room of the guilty. Nor let the equity of the divine procedure be arraigned by the imputation of Christ's merits to the sinner. God has a sovereign right to do whatsoever he pleaseth ; and in numerous instances, even among men, a substitution is admitted.

Jesus is still employed in the work of reconciliation.

Having made atonement by his death, he rose again from the dead for our justification, and is “ now gone “ into heaven, there to appear in the presence of God “ *for us.*” “ If any man sin we have an advocate with “ the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” After his resurrection, he informed his disciples, that all power was given him both in heaven and in earth ; which power he still employs, in conducting to full perfection the glorious work of reconciliation. When God had finished the work of creation, he rested on the seventh day ; so when Christ had finished the work of redemption, he ceased from his labour, and “ entered into his rest.” “ Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and “ to enter into his glory ? By his blood he entered “ *once* into the holy place, having obtained eternal re-“ demption” for his people. He is “ even at the right-“ hand of God,” and “ maketh intercession for us.” There he stands interceding for the fulfilment of the promises which the Father has made *to him* respecting the success of his undertaking and work. *To him* it was promised, “ When he shall make his soul an offer-“ ing for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his “ days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his “ hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall

“ be satisfied.” *To him* is was again said, by the Father, “ *Ask of me*, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.” Christ has now made “ his soul an offering for sin,” he has “ given himself for us;” and as certainly as the one is done, so certainly shall all the promises made to him, concerning the salvation of his people, have their complete accomplishment. Of him the Father says, “ my mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him.”

The promises made concerning his people shall likewise be fulfilled. All those who were given to Christ of the Father shall come to him. During the days of their degeneracy his guardian care shall surround them, and at the time appointed he will either bring them to the means of grace, or the means of grace to them, and by the influences of the spirit introduce them into his spiritual kingdom. He shall see the pleasure of his soul in translating them from the kingdom of darkness, and making them partakers of the atonement. It is pleasing likewise to add, that the intercession of Christ respects their continuance in the faith, and their perseverance unto the end. Hence believers are said to be “ *preserved in Christ Jesus.*” And as he said to Peter, so he says to every believer, “ I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.” “ Wherefore he is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

Nor shall this intercession cease, until all *the bodies* of the saints be re-united to their souls, and both prepared to “ enter into the joy of their Lord.” Well then might Jehovah, by the prophet, call the attention of

intelligent beings, to the contemplation of the character and work, of his “ righteous servant.” “ Behold “ my servant, whom I uphold mine elect, in whom my “ soul delighteth ; I have put my spirit upon him, he “ shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall “ not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard “ in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, “ and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall “ bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail, “ nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the “ earth ; and the isles shall wait for his law.”

Casting the eye over the ground we have now traversed, what a fruitful field of pleasing instruction !! Behold the love of the Father displayed, in preparing and sending his Son to perform the arduous work of man’s salvation. What could God have done more ? “ He hath not withheld his Son, but hath freely given “ him up to death for us all, that whosoever be- “ lieveth in him might not perish, but have everlast- “ ing life. Herein God hath manifested his love to- “ wards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, he sent “ his Son to be the propitiation for sin.” Let every heart, therefore be glad before the Lord, and glow with grateful emotions towards the Father of mercies.

Nor can the mind reflect upon the work of salvation, without beholding the evil of sin, which cost the Son of God such awful sufferings, to procure pardon. And if such things were “ done in the green tree, what “ shall be done in the dry ?” If Jesus endured such agonizing sufferings, what shall be that weight of vengeance that will descend upon the impenitent, who despise the offers of mercy, and go on perversely in the way of their own hearts ; “ who treasure up unto

“ themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and the
“ revelation of the righteous judgment of God. Let
“ therefore the wicked forsake his way, and the un-
“ righteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto
“ the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him ; and
“ to our God, and he will abundantly pardon.”

But let the generous mind say, what gratitude is due to the Son of God, for what he has done to “ deliver from wrath.” Can any mind be so base, as to return his love with indifference or neglect, far less with contempt? will any be so vile, as to despise that salvation, purchased “ not with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ?” will any be so wicked and perverse, by their obstinate rebellion, and criminal neglect, to “ crucify to themselves, the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.” Nay, rather let every impenitent one throw down the weapons of his rebellion, comply with the offers of mercy, and yield himself unto the Lord to serve him. Let the lives of the redeemed be one continued song of gratitude to the sacred Three, for what they have done to save them from deserved punishment. “ If Christ died for all, then are all dead, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again.”

LECTURE XII.

The Persons redeemed, or the Doctrine of Election.

PETER i. 2. “ Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

ALL the doctrines of redemption, and all the lines of revelation, centre in divine perfections. Sacred truths proceed from God, and naturally lead to their celestial source. The revelation of these truths display the glorious excellence inherent in the divine nature, and their purifying energy upon the human character displays the consummate felicity prepared for man. This is particularly evident, with respect to the doctrine of distinguishing grace.

God is the fountain of being, and of intelligence; the former of universal nature, and the governor of all worlds. The perfection of the infinite agent indicates, that he formed the wisest, and the noblest design, in conferring existence; and as no design can rise superior to the manifestation of his own glory, this was unquestionably the object of creation. The most exalted seraph who encircles the throne, and the meanest reptile which crawls in the dust, both answer this im-

portant purpose. To deny this, would tarnish the glory and the dignity of the first cause.

Among the various sharers of existence, God selected man to participate of his divine excellence, and to celebrate "the praise of the glory of his grace." In the morning of time, man appeared shining in all the splendour of the divine image, possessing divine faculties, and extensive capacities, both for operation and enjoyment. Nor did the entrance of sin frustrate the eternal purpose of heaven. "Known unto God are all "his works, from the beginning of the world," and equally known are all the actions and volitions of his rational creatures. All those things which men call contingent, are absolute certainty with God; consequently the entrance of sin, "could not render the "purpose of God of none effect." Although this formed an awful era in the history of man, yet even by this sad event God determined to display his own glory. Both the wickedness and the wrath of man shall praise him. Under his divine guidance, the greatest evil shall be productive of the greatest good.

The dictates of reason, however, clearly evince, that the Creator was entitled to dispose of his offending creatures according to his sovereign pleasure. To call this in question, is to deny his own divine right to do with "his own what seemeth good in his sight." But how could the glory of the Eternal have been maintained, unless the restoration and salvation of man was effected? Hence, to render effectual his gracious design, he determined to save a part of the human family, "according to the grace given them in Christ before the "world began." And how could the counsels of Heaven have been reduced to action, if the ultimate effects of

God's love were committed to a peradventure? How could these be realized, unless he had determined to glorify himself in the complete salvation of the redeemed?

Hence, as the ultimate design of creation was the display of God's glory, so the determination of God respecting the vessels of mercy entered deep into the counsel of peace. Nay, infinite wisdom and divine power, rich mercy and free grace, are all conspicuous in this matter. Having made these preliminary remarks, the definition of the term, the date, the reality, the cause, the manner, the design, and the natural effects of election, are now to be considered.

That we may the more accurately understand this mysterious doctrine, let us first attend to the meaning of the term, by which it is commonly expressed.

In defining terms, the definition should be universal, plain, specific, and calculated to distinguish the thing defined, from all others. The word election, obviously expresses a complex idea. It has a relation to a person who chooseth, to persons or things who are chosen, to a state in which they are previous to their election, and to the state into which they are introduced, in consequence of the choice. It may also denote the destination to office, to dignity, to privilege, and to happiness. In general, it is applied to denote a selection to receive good, although among men, it sometimes denotes a being chosen from among others, to suffering and to death.

Election, as the work of God, and referring to the redemption of men, may therefore be defined, "his " free, sovereign, and distinguishing love, by which he " chose a certain number of Adam's guilty family, to

“ obtain salvation, through sanctification of the spirit, “ and belief of the truth ;” or, in the words of the Synod of Dort, “ Election is the immutable and eternal de- “ cree of God, whereby, according to the free purpose “ of his own will, he chose a certain number of men, “ from among the rest of Adam’s family, who were not “ more worthy nor deserving than others, and appoint- “ ed them to obtain salvation.” Such is that inherent and internal act of God, commonly called election.

The date of this act is eternal.

In one respect, all the acts of God are eternal, because determined in his eternal mind, and equally certain by the determination, as by the actual execution. In a particular manner, this is the fact with respect to election. The secret purpose which God purposed in himself, before the world began, is eternal, and its manifestation in the morning of conversion, is in time. The former is the internal resolution, and the latter the external act of the Most High. From eternity, the salvation of the faithful was determined by the Righteous Judge, the plan formed, the mediator chosen, and the means appointed, consequently, there never was a moment of time in which the favoured people were not the subjects of Jehovah’s choice. To this agree the declarations of Scripture. “ I have loved thee with an “ everlasting love ; God hath from the beginning “ chosen you to salvation ; God hath chosen us in him, “ before the foundation of the world.” This language is expressive of eternal existence. Before the foundation of the world, time did not commence. The birth of time, and of created existence, are of the same date. Previous to the formation of the universe, duration was absolute eternity. Correspondent to this interpretation,

the mansions of glory are represented as prepared for the children of God, before the world began; spiritual blessings given them in Christ Jesus, and he is represented thus addressing his followers, at the last day; “Come, ye blessed of my Father, and inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Hence it follows, that the date of election is eternal; for it would be dishonourable to infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, to suppose that God would prepare mansions without appointing inhabitants, or royal honours without ordaining some to enjoy them. Hence is that beautiful gradation of benevolent exertion, celebrated by the apostle, “whom he did fore-“know, them he also did predestinate; whom he did “predestinate, them he also called, and whom he cal-“led, them he also justified, and whom he justified, “them he also glorified.”

But by what mode of proof is the reality of this doctrine established?

Not by the deductions of reason, but by the celestial declarations of revelation. The feeble efforts of reason cannot explore the secret purposes of heaven. The Scriptures however reveal this doctrine, in the strongest and most explicit language, and the perfections of God also imply its existence. Such is the import of the following expressions. “Elect, according to foreknow-“ledge of God the Father—That the purpose of God, “according to election might stand, God hath not ap-“pointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation, through “our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord knoweth them “that are his; he hath predestinated us unto the adop-“tion of children, by Jesus Christ.” The same doc-“trine is taught by the faithful and true witness, who is

represented as addressing his Father, saying, “ all that “ thou hast given me, shall come to me—Here am I “ and the children whom thou hast given me—Thine “ they were, and thou gavest them me.” Such is the incontrovertible evidence of Scripture concerning this sacred truth.

But what was the cause of distinguishing grace?

Why did God choose some rather than others, from among the corrupted mass? why did he ordain some, and not all to eternal life? Were the selected more virtuous or holy? No. For it has been found, that the date of election was eternal, therefore, the possibility of merit is totally excluded. Hence no cause can be found in the creature, but the gracious work resolves itself into the pleasure of the creation, who says, “ I “ will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.” Contemplating this divine sovereignty, Jesus said unto his Father, “ I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and “ earth, who hath hid these things from the wise and “ the prudent, and hath revealed them unto babes; “ even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.”

But granting that there was no original difference among men, might not God be regulated in the gracious act, in consequence of foreseen faith, and good works. The real and only station, which faith and obedience uniformly occupy in christian experience, is that of a secondary nature. Election is first, they are second. Election the cause, they the effect. Now, it is absurd to suppose, that the effect either preceeds or produces the cause. Hence, says the sacred oracles, “ God hath “ chosen us in him, that we should be holy.” Not because he foresaw that we would, but that “ *we should be holy.*” *God chuses both to the end, and to the means.*

“ As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.” The ordination to eternal life is the cause and believing the effect. The chosen of God are called the sheep of Christ; and unto the multitude he said, “ ye believe “ not, because ye are not of my sheep.” Hence instead of faith or obedience constituting *believers* the sheep of Christ, these virtues would have no existence, unless *that* they had been the chosen sheep of Christ. Again it is written, God hath called us to the obedience of faith. He hath called us with an holy calling, not according to *our works*, but according to his own purpose and grace, which he purposed in Christ Jesus, before the world began.

Nay more, if men were chosen in consequence of foreseen faith and good works, the cause of electing one more than another, would be obvious. The merit of the creature, and not the grace of the Creator. Grace would be excluded in the work of election. Scripture however strenuously opposes this idea, and declares, that “ it is not of him that willeth, nor of him “ that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.” That it is “ not of works, least any man should boast.”

But in what manner *did* God proceed in this glorious act of distinguishing grace.

“ Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world;” and he has likewise determined all the events which are to happen during the whole current of time. In the act of selecting some to salvation is obviously implied the exclusion of others; but his justice is amply conspicuous, because that all were guilty. Farther, when God formed this eternal purpose, he did not consider men as beings who might or might not exist, but as those whom he determined to

bring into existence. Non-existence cannot be the subject either of salvation or condemnation. If God had considered men as persons whom he might or might not create, then it would follow, that he might have decreed the salvation of many who would never have participated of existence. This supposition however is totally inconsistent with the infinite perfection of his wisdom and power. Nay, more, he not only viewed them as persons whom he determined to create, but also as persons who should be created, and who should fall. Selecting to salvation implies the existence of guilt and misery. Salvation is a term devoid of meaning, unless misery exists. Finally, if all were holy and good, then all would be the objects of God's love, therefore he could not disapprove of their conduct, nor prefer one to another.

But there is still greater peculiarity in the manner of God's electing men to salvation.

The mysterious union between Christ and his people is one of those revealed wonders which attract attention in the book of God. There Christ and his people are frequently represented as constituting *one* : he the head, they the members : he the vine, they the branches : he the husband, they the spouse. God likewise viewed them as one in the eternal act of election : hence Christ is emphatically called God's *elect*. “Behold my servant whom I uphold, *mine elect* in whom my soul delighteth. I have laid help upon one that is mighty, I have exalted one chosen from among the people.” It appears therefore, that the specific manner of election was, that Jehovah chose Christ and all his people *in him*. To this agree the words of the Holy Ghost : “God hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling,

“ not according to our works, but according to his own purpose, and grace which was given us *in Christ before the foundation of the world*. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ, according as he hath chosen us *in him* before the foundation of the world.”

But what was the design of God in this distinguishing work?

It was twofold. To display the glory of his divine perfections, and “ to bring many sons to glory.” One great design was, to manifest the glory of his divine perfections. It has already been found, that the infinite wisdom of God always induces him to propose some noble and worthy end in every undertaking ; and as no object can rise superior to the display of his own divine excellence, therefore this was the great object which God had in view in all his works. This was eminently displayed in distinguishing grace. This truth is one of the chief designs of Paul in that memorable chapter, the ninth of the Romans, where he replies to the objections which are brought against this sovereign love of God.

In that remarkable portion of Scripture, Paul shows that the distinguishing grace of selection manifests the divine sovereignty of the Most High.

Have not the monarchs, and princes, and nobles of this world a right to select their own favourites, and to dispense their royal favours ? Why then attempt arrogantly to deprive the Prince of the kings of the earth of that right ? “ Nay, but O man, who art thou, that “ repliest against God ? Shall the thing formed say to “ him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus ? ”

What mortal dares deny him the free exercise of his divine and majestic right? Nor does the Judge of all act with a blind partiality, but with the most consummate wisdom and inflexible justice. Hence Jehovah claims the free exercise of his own power, when he says, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." From this declaration of divine and sovereign power, Paul very accurately reasons, " therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."

Paul there also shows, that God manifests the glory of his power in the election of men to salvation.

In strong and interrogatory language he appeals to the common sense of mankind. "Hath not the *potter* power over the clay of the *same lump*, to make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour?" If such power is granted unto the earthen artificer, why should it be denied to the great Former of all things? The apostle farther reasons, saying, "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long suffering the vessels fitted to destruction." Fitted to destruction! How? By whom? By God? Perfectly impossible, absurd, and blasphemous. But fitted by their own perverseness and impenitence, and rendered the just objects of divine vengeance. The apostle farther reasons, "And what if God, willing to make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of misery which he hath afore-prepared unto glory." Hence their preparation to glory is the work of God, but their fitting for destruction is their own work.

The Apostle proceeds to show, that the clemency and mercy of God are manifested in the election of the faithful.

Who can restrain the compassions of the Father of mercies? Do we blame a prince for extending his royal clemency towards *many* criminals, because he does not towards *all*? Why then does any find fault with God, because he “hath mercy on whom he will have mercy.” Who can resist his will, or render his purpose of none effect? Why is the eye of man evil, because God is good? Why take offence that God has not pardoned *all*, when he was bound to pardon *none*? “Let the “potsherds of the earth strive together, but woe to “him that striveth with his Maker.” Shall we say that there is unrighteousness with God? God forbid; let such a supposition be held in the utmost abhorrence.

Nay, more, the design of God, in election, was likewise to unfold the riches of his glory.

Hence is that strong and emphatical expression, “that “he might make known the riches of his glory, on the “vessels of mercy.” Paul, speaking in another place concerning the chosen of God, says, that they were designed to illustrate the praise of his grace. The glorious grace of God beams forth, in the whole of this wondrous selection of sinners to salvation. When we contemplate Jehovah, as chusing any of the fallen race, we behold him acting the part of an indulgent father toward his forlorn and miserable offspring. Underived existence conveys the idea of the perfection of excellence. The perfection of excellence, includes the perfection of compassion. In this view, God is called the Father of Mercies, and the God in whom compassions

flow. And should it be enquired why this *one*, rather than that *one*? It is answered, in the words of the great Pickett, “ because he is the Lord of all, and hath an “ indisputable right to do with his own as seemeth “ good and right unto himself. Nay, in whatever point of view we contemplate this matter, holy sovereignty, rich grace, royal clemency, divine power, and infinite glory, all shine forth with divine and radiant splendour. “ Be still then, and know that he is “ God. Let all the earth fear the Lord, and let all the “ inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. Shall “ not the judge of all the earth do right ?”

Another design of God, in election, was to bring many sons to glory.

This includes the present and future effects of election. The present effects of distinguishing grace, are the dawn of glory. This, in a peculiar manner, is a doctrine according to godliness: They who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, reason with themselves, saying, “ shall we continue in sin, because grace has “ abounded. God forbid. How shall we, that are dead “ to sin, live any longer therein.” In exact correspondence with this sentiment, it is written, concerning the faithful, that God hath chosen them that they “ should “ be holy and without blame before him in love.” Here the specific reason assigned, why God has chosen, is, that the happy subjects of election should be holy. Hence, election is the parent of holiness. Without election, holiness would have been unknown in this world.

Farther, holiness and humility are inseparable companions. Election, however, is eminently calculated to produce humility. Why, says the distinguished one,

has God displayed his love to me more than others? Why are such honours conferred on me? Why am I put in possession of such important privileges? Who has made me to differ? What have I that I have not received? Reflecting upon the distinguishing goodness of God, the holy soul feels the warmest sentiment of gratitude, and the strongest affection towards God. "O the height and the depth, the length and the breadth, of the love of God." How unsearchable is his wisdom, and his ways past finding out.!

But what are the future consequences of election to the faithful?

Electing favours are all eternal. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee. As many as were ordained to eternal life believed. Whom he did predestinate, them he also glorified." The design of God, in election, is to bring all his children to everlasting life: Nor can this design be frustrated. God is of one mind, who can change him? He resteth in his love, and his gifts and callings are without repentance. God did not chuse in consequence of any superior excellence or virtue, and he will not cast off in consequence of imperfection or wandering from the path of duty. "If his children forsake his law, he will punish their transgressions, but he will not take away his love from them, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail. The purpose of God, according to election, shall stand." "My counsel," saith he, "shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." The immutability of his counsel is founded in the immutability of his nature; and as the one is invariable, so also is the other. He is the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness nor shadow

of turning. " How happy then are the people who are " in such a case ? Yea, happy is that people whose God " is the Lord. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of " God's elect ? it is God that justifieth, who is he that " condemneth ? it is Christ that died, yea, rather, who " is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, " and maketh intercession for us." Jesus is able " to " save to the uttermost, seeing he ever liveth to make " intercession for us."

But a question, in which we are all deeply interested, here presents itself. If such are the blessed effects of election, is it possible to acquire any certain knowledge of our election, and how may this be obtained?

The election of the faithful is not only certain in the immutable decree of God, but the elected may also acquire the certainty of it, in their own comfortable experience. The cause is discovered by the effects. The effects of election prove its existence. " As many " as were ordained to eternal life believed." If, therefore, a person may know that he has faith, so also that he is elected ; may not the faithful know that they have passed from death to life ? so likewise may they know that they are among the number ordained to eternal life. " The spirit himself beareth witness with our " spirits, that we are the children of God. Ye are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the " earnest of the inheritance, until the redemption of " the purchased possession."

It is likewise written, give all diligence to make your calling and election sure. It is certainly impossible to render election surer, than it is in the purpose and decree of God, but they are admonished to render it sure to themselves, by bringing forth the fruits of election,

and abounding in all the peaceable fruits of righteousness. Finally, the genuine evidences of election are, true faith, a hatred of sin, and avoiding every appearance of evil, a sincere desire after holiness, an unfeigned love to God, a love of the brethren and even of enemies, and a heart more and more weaned from the world, and longing for heaven and glory. Such an one may assuredly know, that he is ordained unto eternal life.

LECTURE XIII.

General call of the Gospel.

PROV. viii. 4. “*Unto you O men I call, and my voice is to the sons of men.*”

HUMAN life would be insipid without variety. The most delightful object or scene soon loses its first impressions. In the kindness of heaven, however, new ones arise in gradual succession. In the private, the domestic, or the public circles, new occurrences and enjoyments present themselves. Health and sickness, pleasure and pain, comfort and sorrow, activity and languor, alternately mingle in the human cup. The gaiety, the levity, and the sprightliness of youth, produce a pleasing variety to the gravity, the seriousness, and composure of age. What nameless variety of characters compose every public assembly? What variety of intellectual powers beam from every countenance, to the instruction and amusement of the beholder?

The path of life is likewise enlivened by the variety of seasons. Rather than human life become insipid or stagnate, the life-giving spring shall be succeeded by the blooming summer, and the blooming summer be contrasted with the golden harvest. Nor could even

these seasons, however pleasant, afford sufficient relish, were they not succeeded by the rainy autumn, and the stormy winter.

The calm stillness of the morning is followed by the noisy bustle of the day, and that bustling noise by the serenity of the twilight, which gradually descends to the serenity of the evening, and sinks at length into the silence of the midnight. Nay, all nature teems with variety, calculated to display the benevolence of the Creator towards man.

Nor is this propensity in human nature, neglected in the field of revelation. There variety and utility are happily blended. The interesting history of creation and of innocence, are followed by the afflicting history of degradation and of guilt. The narrative of primeval manners, by the enormity of antedeluvian depravity. The history of the transactions and religion of the Patriarchal age, by the institutions and ceremonies of the Mosiac economy; and both these indicating, through all their gradations, that they were only "the rudiments of the world, and the shadow of "better things to come." These dark manifestations were succeeded by the radiant brightness of "the sun "of righteousness."

Among the doctrines of inspiration, the same pleasing variety prevails. Of this we have already obtained full proof, in the variety which has reigned through the former Lectures. These may all be viewed as paving the way for the flow of pardon to the human heart; but the doctrine of the general call of the gospel, brings the sinner into the actual enjoyment of salvation. The eternal and immutable act of distinguishing grace, produces no real change in the

situation of its favoured objects. "And were by nature "children of wrath, *even as others.*" The children of God, although destined to an heavenly inheritance, and predestinated to eternal life, are born in the same guilty, and remain in the same forlorn state as the rest of mankind, until the call of the gospel reaches their hearts, and induces them to "arise and go to "their Father." In the gracious purpose of God, they were considered as guilty, and continue to groan under the load of natural and acquired guilt, until, by the energy of the divine spirit, their souls are enlightened, convinced, and changed. In the illustration of this doctrine, the persons who are called, and their deplorable state previous to their call, the nature of the call itself, the means employed, the efficient cause of their success, the necessity and suitableness of this call, and the lessons of Christian practice taught by it, are the principal subjects which come under review.

The persons who are called, and their state previous to that happy hour.

Creation infers dependence, and dependence a right to disposal. God is the univeral parent, therefore has an unquestionable right to dispose of his creatures according to his pleasure. Hence the strong interroga-
tion of scripture, "Who can limit the Holy One of "Israel?" God cannot be limited any farther than he is pleased to limit himself, either by promise or by threatening. When he utters either the one or the other, he is *then* limited by the rectitude of his nature, to accomplish what he has promised, and to execute what he has threatened.

In the unrestrained exercise of his inherent right, he has revealed the method of reconciliation in the scrip-

tures, and appointed the gospel to “ be preached to all “ nations, to make known the unsearchable riches of “ Christ.” In this gospel, the pardon of all sin is proclaimed to the vilest offender, “ and all men every “ where are commanded to repent. Acting the part of an indulgent, though offended sovereign, he sends forth his royal proclamation, offering pardon to all who will receive it through faith in the righteousness of Christ. Hence, in the nature of things, it is obvious, that this offer has a respect to mankind as criminal. Pardon implies offence. A king cannot pardon him who has never offended. The existence of transgression gives exercise to royal clemency. Melancholy fact, however, accords with Scripture evidence to establish the mournful conclusion, that “ all have sinned, and “ come short of the glory of God.” Numerous facts, appearing in the conduct of all generations, and nations, and churches, and individuals, afford many evidences that mankind are now reduced to a state both of guilt and wretchedness.

The sacred oracles agree with this general fact, when, in language the most strong and determinate, they declare, that “ the imagination of man’s heart is only evil, “ and that continually;” that “ the whole world lieth “ in wickedness;” that “ they go astray from the “ womb;” that “ all men are dead in trespasses and “ sins;” and that “ out of the heart proceed evil “ thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, “ false witnesses, blasphemies, and every evil work.” In this woeful state the general call of the gospel respects men as equally criminal, and in one collective whole groaning under the curse of the broken law. Hence the conclusion is obvious, that the general call

of the gospel is to all, without distinction of rank, or age, or situation, or character ; and it is equally obvious, that this call finds all its happy subjects in a state of guilt, misery, and woe. There is no authority from the word of God to limit or restrict the offer of mercy. In no instance does the Divine Spirit limit this gracious invitation : and “ who hath directed the Spirit of the “ Lord, or who, being his counsellor, hath taught him “ wisdom ? ” The subjects of salvation are “ ordained to “ eternal life,” and the general call of the gospel is sent to gather them out of all the wilds of iniquity where they have wandered from happiness and from God. This comfortable truth however will appear with double lustre by attending to the nature of the call itself.

The call of the gospel is universal.

This truth has already been partially mentioned ; but its universal nature will farther appear from the following chain of thought. God is the universal Father ; and all his children, having offended, are equally criminal ; and therefore, to display the benevolence of his nature, and that “ every mouth might be stopped,” and all the world become guilty before him, he makes a full and free offer of pardon. So it has seemed good unto the Father of mercies, who will give no “ account of “ his ways to the sons of men.” To this agree the sentiments of inspiration, which, in language where no obscurity, no ambiguity, no limitation, no evasion reign, positively offers salvation to all who will receive it. Of this sufficient evidence may be selected from every part of the sacred record. This general invitation of mercy was included in the first promise, that “ the seed of the “ woman should bruise the head of the serpent.” The heavenly and consoling declaration, that “ the promise

“ is unto *you* and to your *children*, and to all that are “ afar off, even as many as the Lord your God shall “ call,” was as significant to Adam as to any of his posterity. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, and Noah, who was favoured to survive the old, and honoured to be the father and founder of the new world, proclaimed the universal call of the gospel, and exhorted “ all men “ every where to repent,” while the patience of heaven was extended towards them for the long space of an “ hundred and twenty years.” The same comfortable sentiment was communicated to Abraham, when God said unto him, “ in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed!”

When the ceremonial institution of Moses was appointed, this general intimation of mercy was included, in the nature and essence of many ceremonies and sacrifices of that ritual. The national sacrifices which were offered, and the public atonements which were made for “ all the congregation,” were strong symbolical calls to all the children of Israel, to come and shelter under “ the wings of the Sun of righteousness.” This doctrine shone with peculiar lustre, in the appointment of the brazen serpent. The whole congregation of Israel had sinned, and the Lord punished them by sending fiery serpents among them, who bit many of the people, and they died. Moses prayed unto the Lord, and he commanded him to make a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and to proclaim throughout the camp, that when any man was stung with the fiery serpent, he was instantly to look up to the brazen serpent, and he should be healed. In all this, the general invitation of mercy is obvious. All the congregation had sinned, and God prepared salvation for all. The whole con-

gregation were commanded to look up to the brazen serpent for healing, “ and it came to pass, that as many “ as looked up, were made perfectly whole.” Here there was no limitation nor restriction. None were excluded, if they did not wantonly exclude themselves, by a contemptuous neglect of the salvation provided. Nor is mere conjecture the interpreter, for a New Testament writer approaches, saying, “ as Moses lifted up “ the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son “ of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him “ might not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Gliding along the current of revelation, the same melodious voice continues to sound in the ears, from the neighbouring hills. Passing by the verdant vallies, and variegated hills of Wisdom, the determinate and ravishing voice of Solomon is heard, saying, “ wisdom “ crieth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets, “ she crieth in the chief place of concourse ; in the “ openings of the gates in the city, she uttereth her “ words, saying, how long the simple ones will ye love “ simplicity, and the scorners delight in their scorning, “ and fools hate knowledge ? turn ye at my reproof, “ behold I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will “ make known my words unto you.” It is scarcely possible to teach the doctrine of the general call of the gospel, in more strong and determinate language, than is done in this beautiful passage.

With a voice equally melodious and distinct, Solomon is again heard saying, “ Doeth not wis- “ dom cry, and understanding put forth her voice ? “ she standeth in the top of high places, by the “ way in the places of the paths ; she crieth at the “ gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at

“ the doors: unto you O men I call, and my voice is
 “ to the sons of men. O ye simple understand wisdom,
 “ and ye fools be of an understanding heart.” *

But what is that sweet and pleasant voice, which succeeds to the voice of wisdom? It is the accents of the evangelical prophet, saying, “ Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye buy wine and milk without money, and without price.” Nay, arguments mingle with entreaties. “ Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your souls delight themselves in fatness.” † Nay in this region, the voice of a greater than Solomon is heard, saying, “ look unto me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth, for I am God, and beside me there is no Saviour.” Ye happy ones who are in search after salvation, pursue your course, and as ye pass along, increasing sounds will delight your ears, and ravish your hearts.

Entering the New Testament regions, these will increase both in distinctness and in number. Ye will pursue your journey but a little way, when ye shall hear the Saviour of men crying, “ come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.—Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.—In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, if any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink, and the water that I

* Proverbs vii. 1—5.

† Isaiah Iv. 1, 5.

“ shall give him, shall be in him a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life.” In fine, this is the doctrine uniformly taught by our Lord, during the days of his flesh, when he preached the doctrine of repentance, and admonished his countrymen to believe in him, as the sent of the Father. Hence we hear him saying unto the multitude, “ this is the command of God, “ that ye believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ.” And again, this is the work of God, that ye believe in him whom the Father hath sent. The same truth is taught in these cheering words, “ God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life.” Nay this doctrine is most directly taught, in the message which the apostles received from Christ, to deliver to the nations. “ Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.” No more evidence is necessary to establish this comfortable doctrine, that salvation is offered to all men, who read the Scriptures or hear the gospel? Certainly, if words have any meaning at all, or if we are to understand the language of Scripture in the common use of words, these various passages teach a full and free offer of salvation to all who will receive it. Comfortable doctrine indeed to the soul groaning under a sense of sin, and eagerly longing for pardon.

The general call of the gospel is also admirably suited to the nature and circumstances of man.

Guilt naturally produces suspicion. The man conscious of guilt dreads deserved punishment. Man has grievously offended, therefore he can scarcely be per-

suaded that God will pardon. He has justly merited, therefore he dreads deserved punishment. To eradicate these suspicious thoughts from the agitated mind, God has proclaimed this free and ample offer of pardon. Hope is a strong enticement to action, and the prospect of extensive advantage strongly impels to activity. The invitation of mercy is calculated to move the springs of action in the human mind, because it presents to the view of the mind the hope of an inheritance that "is " incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not a " way " reserved in heaven for them who believe the gospel and receive the offer of mercy held forth to sinners. Nor are the joys of a believer merely referred to a future state, for he has present and joyous prospects set before him. That moment in which he believes the gospel, he experienceth " the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, filling his heart and mind through Christ Jesus." " Then his fellowship is with " the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." Then all the pleasing sensations which naturally result from a sense of pardon fill his soul " with all joy and peace in believing." Hence, says Christ, " if any hear my voice " and open the door, I will come in and sup with him, " and he with me."

The human mind is also strongly impelled to action by the principle of fear. When the gospel is preached according to the Scripture rule it is calculated to alarm the guilty conscience. The promises and threatenings of the word reciprocally operate. The one attacks the hopes, and the other the fears of the sinner. " Every steward who is rightly instructed in the gospel of the kingdom" will blend these together in his public instructions. To move the dormant and refractory powers

of the soul, he will present the terrors of the law in all their extent and reality before the sinners. To move the more generous and gentle powers of the soul, and to prevent the awakened mind from despairing of the mercy of God, he will at the same publish the free and gracious offer of salvation to every sinner, however vile and abandoned his character. In fine, in the nature of the general call of the gospel, there is every thing calculated to move the human affections, to interest the passions, and incline man to repentance and reformation; consequently it is admirably suited to the nature and circumstances of man.

But the call of the gospel is powerful as well as suitable and universal.

The call of the gospel is of a two-fold nature, external and internal. The external call is given in the Scriptures of truth, and in the preached gospel. This I have proved to be without any limitation or restriction. The internal call is that gracious influence exerted upon the mind in the day of conversion, whereby the powers of the mind are induced to accept of salvation, and enabled to bring forth the fruits of righteousness to the glory of God.

Now, it is a melancholy fact, that all they who hear the gospel do not comply with its general invitation. On the contrary, multitudes lend a deaf ear, and, nevertheless of all the threatenings and admonitions of the gospel, still go on in the perverseness of their hearts. Warnings, and reproofs, and threatenings, and promises, and expostulations, and entreaties, unite their force in vain. Nay, the very means which have proved effectual for the salvation of others, have produced no salutary effect upon them. What reason can be as-

signed for this want of success? None certainly in the deficiency of the means, since these have proved the salvation of others equally hardened and criminal. The only reason that can be assigned is the sovereign pleasure of him who hath said, "I will have mercy on whom "I will have mercy."

Nay, more, both the equity and benevolence of the divine character are vindicated, because it is entirely owing to the divine power and grace of God that any are reduced to obedience. He exerts "the exceeding "greatness of that almighty power which he wrought in "Jesus when he raised him from the dead," and awakens their minds to attend to the offers of mercy tendered in the gospel. "He who at first commanded the light "to shine out of darkness, shines in their hearts to give "them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God "in the force of Jesus." The gracious influence of the divine Spirit is exerted upon the various powers of the soul, and they are brought into subjection to the will of God,—the mind brought to a sense of sin, the errors of life are set against the sinner, and all his transgressions appear in their native deformity and vileness. Such discoveries of the divine law, in all its purity and perfection, are obtained, as tend to unfold the real nature and turpitude of sin.

Proper views of the divine law lead to proper views of the nature of God; and when these are obtained, the mind beholds the baseness of rebelling against such a kind and indulgent Father. The mind must be convinced of the clemency of God before it will cordially repent of sin, or comply with the gracious offer of pardon. A discovery of sin, without a conviction of the readiness of God to pardon, would plunge the soul into

the depths of despair. In mercy, therefore, the one accompanies the other in the dealings of God with the awaked sinner. And the soul, discovering the remedy provided, it is sweetly constrained to accept of Christ as held forth in the gospel ;—to trust in him as a prophet for that instruction which is necessary to remove the darkness of the human understanding ;—to depend upon his merits and atonement as a priest for reconciliation with an offended God ;—to yield obedience to him as a king ;—and cheerfully to endeavour to obey all his commandments, and to observe all his ordinances. In fine, to receive Jesus in all his offices, and to trust in the whole of his redeeming merit for salvation.

But what are the means usually employed to gather together the children of God into his family ?

In addition to what has already entered into the chain of thought employed, it may be sufficient to mention, that the preaching of the word is the chief mean employed by the divine Spirit. “ How shall they believe “ in him of whom they have not heard ? And how shall “ they hear without a preacher ? And how shall they “ preach except they be sent.” The preaching of the gospel is not only the ordinance appointed of God for this purpose, but it is in its own nature admirably calculated to produce the desired effect. It is suited to the great bulk of mankind, who are, by means of manual labour prevented from labourious research after knowledge. It is also suited in its very nature to operate upon the various powers of the soul more than the mere reading of the word.

The various dispensations of providence likewise co-operate with the preaching of the word to induce the mind to comply with the general call of the gospel. In

the day of gaiety and health the mind too frequently neglects the important concerns of salvation ; but in kindness to the soul, God visits with personal affliction, and sends some of those diseases to which human nature is liable, as the messenger of mercy to the soul. The sinner is laid, upon the bed of affliction; “ his body is racked with “ pain, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain.” Distress produses serious reflection. Dreading the approach of death, the mind is alarmed. It reviews the past, and looks forward to the future. As both Scripture and the nature of things assure the mind that the future state will be influenced by the present conduct, conscience condemns the guilty man, and awakens his mind to the most dreadful forebodings. In this distressed situation he casts his eyes around for help, and is directed by the divine Spirit to seek for salvation to Jesus, “ the only name given under heaven whereby men can “ be saved.” Hence it sometimes happens, that they who neglected to hear the preached gospel are constrained to hear the voice of affliction ; and in this way salvation comes to their hearts. Then, in the language of David, they say, “ it hath been good for me that I “ was afflicted ; before I was afflicted I went astray, but “ now I have learned thy law.”

The affecting but powerful voice of domestic affliction is likewise employed to accomplish this gracious work. The thoughtless, inconsiderate, and profligate husband is pursuing the path of vice ; but, lo ! death approaches his dwelling, and removes the companion of his youth and the joy of his heart ; he is moyed, alarmed, rendered thoughtful ; and the Spirit operating with such a mournful visitation, he listens to the voice of mercy, and seeks after salvation. The giddy, irreligi-

ous wife is beheld living without God, and without any concern about salvation ; the stroke of death reaches the heart of her beloved husband, and instant reflection springs in upon her mind, and continues to operate until she begins to experience the joys of pardon and the sweets of salvation. Behold yonder parents rejoicing under the smile of indulgent Heaven, flourishing in affluence, and their numerous family blooming around them ; but instead of “ rendering unto God according “ to the favours bestowed upon them,” living in criminal indifference of the name, the Sabbath, and the ordinances of God : at such a time however as they “ look- “ ed not for it, and in such an hour when they were not “ aware,” one of these diseases incident to sinful humanity reaches their dwelling, it removes one child after another until it empties the once joyful dwelling. Now desolation, and weeping, and mourning, and lamentation ensue. Now those who would not hear the general call of the gospel are made to listen to the particular call of death. The sweet accents of the gospel were despised, but the bitter accents of bereavement must be heard. God can send desolation and death after those who fly from his admonitions in the public assemblies of the faithful. That his merciful purposes may be effected his gracious influence operates with this afflicting visitation, and the loss of their children becomes the salvation of their souls. Before this affliction they were wicked and careless, now they are pious, and regular in their attendance upon the ordinances of religion. By such ways, and seeming unpleasant measures, God sometimes brings in his rebellious children, and makes them “ partakers of his holy calling.”

But since these means are not always successful, the question naturally occurs, what is the efficient cause of their success in any instance?

This question involves the most serious considerations. The cause of ultimate success cannot be ascribed to the simple use of the means employed, however suitable, because these same means prove salvation to some, and not to others. Neither is their success to be ascribed to the superior amiableness or gentleness of the dispositions of them who are saved, for these, in many instances, are not only equally perverse, but even more refractory and vile than others. To this agree both the narrative of Scripture, and the history of conversion. The only, and principal cause, originates from the sovereign power and good pleasure of the Most High. He is the sovereign Lord of nature, and who can quarrel with any of his righteous ways? for “he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy.” Why arraign the clemency of a prince for showing mercy to any, although he has not done so to all? “Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say unto him that formed it, why hast thou made me this or that?” Hence, in Scripture, we find this gracious work of calling sinners, and making them sharers of salvation, ascribed to God himself. Paul, when writing to his beloved Timothy, encouraged him to diligence in the work of the ministry, and comforted him amidst all his afflictions, from the consideration of the grace of God displayed in effectual calling. “God hath saved *us*, and *called* us with an “holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own *purpose*, and grace which was given “us in Christ, before the world began.” Here the

general call of the gospel is represented as the work of God the Father, and it is termed “ an holy calling.” Holy, as being the work of the God of holiness, and holy, as bringing the soul to a state of holiness. Holy, because it glorifies the divine perfections, and induceth the sinner “ to abound in all the peaceable fruits of “ righteousness.” This calling is likewise represented, as originating from his own purpose and grace. Here salvation in all its branches commences, and to this cause, every exertion of mercy must be traced. “ Even “ so, O Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.”

The same doctrine is taught in many other passages, where it is written, “ Many are called, but few are “ chosen—As many as were ordained to eternal life be-“ lieved—Whom he did predestinate, them *he* also call-“ ed—Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many “ wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many “ noble are ealled.” God often chuseth and calleth the meanest of the human race, that the glory of his grace may shine with redoubled splendour, and that all the churches may know, that “ he doeth according “ to his will, in the armies of heaven, and among the “ inhabitants of the earth.” Humble thyself in the dust, thou highly favoured one who hath been saved, “ and called with an holy calling.” Remember the strong interrogation of Paul, “ Who maketh thee to “ differ, What hast thou that thou hast not received? “ and if thou hast received it, why doest thou boast, as “ though thou hadst not received it?” Yes, say in the language of sincere gratitude, and deep humility, “ What am I, O Lord, or my father’s house, that thou “ hast brought me hitherto?” Why hast thou called me out of darkness, into thy marvelous light, and tran-

slated me from the kingdom of darkness, into that of thy dear Son? Why, O Lord, have I been taken out of a world lying in wickedness, and introduced into the church and family of God, and made a fellow citizen of the saints and household of God? Why has such a vile creature, who deserved to have been associated for ever with the workers of iniquity, a name and place among the ransomed of the Lord? Surely this is not the manner of men, O Lord. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name. Such ought to be the sentiments and exercise of every soul who “is saved, and called with an holy “calling.”

But what is the *necessity* of the general call, when they only who are *specially* called, shall obtain the inheritance?

This question is of high importance, both in doctrine and in practice. It is necessary to vindicate the honour, clemency, justice, and mercy, of the Most High. It is necessary to encourage all men to seek after salvation, to render the indolent and perverse without excuse, “that every mouth may be stopped, and all the “world become guilty before God;” to direct the public instructions of the servants of God, in offering pardon to all, since they are unacquainted with the secret counsel and purposes of heaven respecting the salvation of the chosen. To them it belongs to give the general and indefinite offer, and to the Holy Ghost to render the same effectual to the salvation of the chosen.

Nor let any say this doctrine leads to sin, because it offers salvation to sinners of every description. Experience proves the contrary; for all they who yield obedience to this heavenly calling, are zealous of good

works. The hope which this inspires, purifies the heart and life. Nay, more, when the human mind has no prospect of pardon or forgiveness, it naturally becomes more vile and desperate, in the practice of iniquity. Hence the peace of society, and the general comforts of mankind, are more indebted to this doctrine, than is properly acknowledged. Were it not for this doctrine, and the influence of restraining grace upon the human mind, this world would become a field of rapine and blood, and the wicked would "scatter fire-brands, arrows, and death around them."

Many are the important lessons, both of prudence and of piety, taught by this doctrine.

It teaches the ministers how they ought to preach the gospel of the kingdom. That, according to the express command of Christ, they are to preach the gospel to every creature, and to command all men every were to repent. That for their encouragement, salvation in all its fulness, and excellence is to be offered to all men. That they are to be charged, instead of impiously prying into the secrets of heaven, respecting their election, which belongs only to God, to depart from all iniquity, to deny all ungodliness and wordly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly. That, every man who hears the gospel, is commanded by the authority of God to use with persevering diligence, and with increasing assiduity, the appointed means for obtaining salvation, that so they may be made partakers of the heavenly calling, and children of God, through faith in his Son Jesus Christ. And they are also taught to assure every man, that *none* ever used these means in a proper manner without success. None ever sought God in vain. For he has said, "ask and ye shall receive,

" seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you."

This doctrine likewise teaches how to comfort the soul groaning under a sense of sin. It is natural for the mind, in such circumstances, even to magnify guilt, and to yield to despair. That the mind however may not be swallowed up of over much sorrow, the general offer of mercy is to be presented to view. Then the sorrowful soul is to be reminded, that with God there is plenteous redemption, that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin, that God is the Father of mercies, from whom compassions flow. To afford the strongest assurance to the mind, the examples of those who have been pardoned, although notorious offenders, are to be set forth in all their energy and convincing strength. For if Adam, who by one transgression ruined the whole human race was pardoned.—If Abraham, who lived many years an idolator, was made the father of the faithful—if Manasseh, who made the streets of Jerusalem to swim with innocent blood, was made "to acknowledge the Lord, " that he was God"—if Paul, "who was formerly a persecutor, a blasphemer, and an injurious person," was made "a chosen vessel to carry the name of Jesus to the heathen, and to preach among them the unsearchable riches of Christ,"—who after these can despair of the mercy of Heaven? If redeeming mercy reached the heart of the thief on the cross:—nay, if the profligate woman in the gospel, Mary Magdalene, and the woman of Samaria were pardoned, and washed, and sanctified in the name of the Lord, and by the power of his grace, is not the comfortable truth sufficiently evident, that "the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin."

This doctrine is also of singular utility to the believer who is walking in darkness, and seeing no light. Has the holy soul lost the favourable sense of divine love, and is he mourning, and saying, “O that it were with “ me as in months past. Behold I go backward, but he “ is not there, and forward, but cannot perceive him. “ Hath God forgotten to be gracious, hath he in anger “ shut up his tender mercies, and will the Lord be fa-“ vorable no more?” In such a gloomy hour, and in such a disconsolate moment, how beneficial the general call of the gospel? For if the pious soul cannot perceive his union to Christ, and is not favoured with the comfortable smile of his Father, he may, and he cannot but perceive, that he may come and receive salvation from him, who says “unto you, O men, I call, “ and my voice is to the sons of men.—Him that cometh “ unto me I will in no wise cast out.—Look unto me, “ and be ye saved all the ends of earth.”

LECTURE XIV.

Of Justification.

Rom. iii. 24. “*Being justified freely by his grace through the re-
demption that is in Christ Jesus.*”

ALL the doctrines of salvation are important; but, to guilty men, the doctrine of justification is peculiarly important. Without justification the guilty can neither obtain divine communion here, nor eternal felicity hereafter.

But however highly important, unenlightened reason could neither have discovered its existence, nor understood its nature. The sacred oracles alone reveal the glorious truth, that “there is redemption through the “blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of sins” through his imputed righteousness. Mankind have universally experienced the existence of sin; but how it entered the fair creation of God, and how its dire effects may be prevented or removed, they could not discover. Calamity reigned in every region, but the gospel alone provided a remedy. Now the mind no longer wanders in uncertainty and doubt, but is directed to the cross of Jesus, where atonement was made, and from whence the judge smiles upon the believing sinner. Nor was the doctrine of justification unknown in any period of

the church. Not long after the dawn of time this doctrine was revealed in the first promise ; and Abel, being justified through faith, entered the gates of glory. As time rolled on this truth was more distinctly understood ; and by the teaching of our Lord and his apostles, displayed in all its heavenly nature and vast importance. The meaning of the term, the nature, the cause, and the effects of justification, will compose the materials of the present lecture.

What is the import of the word *justification* ?

It is of a complex and extensive signification. It is borrowed from the transactions of civil society, and applied to the gracious method of receiving sinners into the favour of God. It indicates, that the person who is justified is treated as if he was righteous, although he has sinned, and deserved the punishment denounced in the law against transgressors. Justification is the act of a judge, declaring an accused person acquitted from legal guilt, and not the operation of forming a person righteous by an inherent change. According to the usual practice of civil courts, when a person is accused of a crime, he must either be condemned or acquitted ; and should legal guilt expose to condemnation, he may be pardoned but he cannot be justified, and should he be justified he cannot stand in need of pardon. In a trial before a civil judge, it sometimes happens, that a criminal may be acquitted through a deficiency of legal evidence, even when the conviction of his guilt is strong both in the minds of the judges and the of spectators ; yet no new accusation can be brought against him for that crime. It is however evident, that such a person could not be said to be justified, or worthy of the honour and respect of an innocent citizen ; but if no degree of guilt

appears against the accused person, then he is completely justified, and sustains no degradation of character or injury in his reputation, and is worthy of the confidence of his prince and the affection of his fellow-subjects. It appears therefore, that justification in the original meaning of the word is distinct from pardon, and signifies not only that the accused person has been acquitted, but also that, being innocent, no legal charge ought ever to have been preferred against him.

But although such is the meaning of the term in the transactions of society, yet in the sinner's justification before God it is always connected with pardon, and supposes the existence of guilt. The justified of God are considered as ungodly, and righteousness imputed to them without works. In this transaction they are deemed worthy of life, although naturally worthy of death. Hence the apostle denominates this action of God towards the sinner "the justification of life." That sentence by which the sinner is not only pardoned, but his right to the reward of righteousness ascertained, and rendered as effective as if he had never offended. In consequence of sin mankind have been subjected to condemnation, but in justification the sentence is reversed.

Nor is any evidence necessary to convince the intelligent reader, that the words, *justify*, *justified*, and *justification*, are, in Scripture, opposed to the words, *condemn*, *condemned*, and *condemnation*. The term *justification* therefore denotes, this gracious work of acquittal, the judge by whom the sentence is pronounced, the persons who are acquitted, and their consequent advantages. These simple ideas are included in the complex term, *justification*.

There are however only two possible methods of justification. The law of God may declare a person justified, when he has never violated any of its precepts, nor committed any crime meriting punishment. In this manner the angels, who kept their first estate, are denominated righteous. The law also provides for the justification even of them who have offended: and this is done in the following manner. When a person who is properly qualified to give satisfaction comes forward, and engages willingly to give compensation in the room and stead of the offender, then the law may justly accept of that satisfaction. Such are the only two methods of justification, which correspond with the perfection and immutability of the divine law.

It is however too obvious, that by the first of these none of the degenerate family of Adam can be justified. By this method the gates of glory are forever barred, and the path to felicity rendered impassible. By this the offender is deprived of all hope, and doomed to endless destruction and woe. The obedience, or the satisfaction, required by the law, must be perfect or it cannot be accepted. It is absurd to suppose, that the immutable law of heaven can either be altered or mitigated, or accommodated to the circumstances of degenerate man.

It is pleasing however to add, that through the voluntarily and perfect righteousness of Jesus, God has provided a glorious method of justification,—a method by which God is declared just when he justifies the sinner who believes in Jesus:—a justification by which divine justice, boundless grace, and immaculate holiness, are illustriously displayed.

Justification also respects God, conscience, and our fellow-creatures. The first is by grace, and the other

two by works. "It is God that justifieth :" he is the great judge who presides, and from whose judgment there is no appeal. Hence, as justification respects him, it is complete, free, irreversible, and eternal.

The justification of the ungodly is *complete*.

All the works of omnipotence are perfect. The works of frail, limited mortals, are imperfect, either from a defect in the contrivance, a deficiency of power to effectuate, or from a change of inclination ; but none of these things can in the least affect the conduct of God. Infinite wisdom, almighty power, and invariable determination, are essential to the divine nature ; hence, as justification is the work of God, it must be complete.

The nature of the divine law also proves, that the justification of the sinner is complete. The divine law, similar to its author, is holy, just, and good, therefore it cannot be satisfied without an equal compensation. The contrary supposition is subversive of all the radical principles of divine government. Hence that justification which saves the sinner, must be exactly adopted to his wants, to the perfection of the divine nature, and to the immutability of the divine law. Reason herself indicates, that it must answer all the wants of the sinner, and all the demands of the law. It must include all sins, and all their aggravations. If one sin is excluded, it will plunge the soul into the deeps of misery. "Every sin deserves God's wrath and curse, " both in this life and that which is to come ; " therefore every sin must be forgiven, or the soul must still be exposed to justly-merited vengeance.

It is pleasing however to remark, that as a complete justification is necessary, so the sacred oracles reveal

such a justification. Hence are those heavenly declarations, “Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of “the sea—I will cleanse them from all their iniquities, “whereby they have sinned against me, saith the “Lord.” Again he saith, “I will pardon *all* their “transgressions. David, celebrating the kindness of God towards his ancient church, says, “Lord thou “hast been favourable unto thy land, thou hast brought “back the captivity of Jacob. Thou hast forgiven the “iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered *all* their “sin.” And in another place, the same pious king, rejoicing in his own personal experience of salvation, says, “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all “his benefits, who forgiveth *all* thine iniquities, who “healeth all thy diseases.” Expatiating upon the same delightful subject, he again says, “Let Israel “hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, “and with him is plenteous redemption. And he shall “redeem Israel from *all* her iniquities.” The same doctrine is taught in the New Testament, where we are assured, that “the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth “from *all* sin;” and that “Jesus is able to save them “to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing “he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” To forgive sin is the work of God only, and this he declares, in these passages, he will do completely and perfectly. And all iniquity being forgiven, the justified can never come into condemnation, but are passed from *legal* death to *spiritual life*. It is indeed a mournful fact, that the children of God may, and do actually, commit grievous offences after the day of conversion, but he “will visit their transgression with the “rod, and their iniquity with stripes; nevertheless his

“ loving kindness he will not utterly take from them, “ nor suffer his faithfulness to fail.” Hence it is written, “ he will bring forth judgment unto victory.”

Justification is also free.

“ Being justified freely by his grace through the re-“ demption that is in Christ Jesus.” Justification is the gift of God ; and what is freer than a gift ? But, in the nature of things, what can man give to purchase pardon ? The virtue of man, even in the days of innocence, could not rise superior to the equitable demands of the divine law. Divine rectitude required the utmost extent of obedience. How deplorable is then the present state of man, since he has both stained his character and enfeebled his mental powers ? Sin merits infinite punishment : but can this punishment be endured by a finite and guilty creature ? Perfectly impossible, either in supposition or fact. Hence, since sin is an infinite evil, pardon must be of an infinite value ; and as no sinner can give a sufficient ransom for the offence committed, salvation must either be free, or the law accept of a partial satisfaction. But “ the law of God cannot be broken.” It cannot be altered or mitigated : nothing less than a complete compensation will answer the demands of the immutable law of Heaven. The conclusion is obvious, either that justification must be free, or man shall never taste of its happy effects.

Human merit is totally excluded in the justification of the sinner : “ his righteousness is as filthy rags before “ God, and as “ dross and reprobate silver.” Although the sinner should weep an ocean of blood it could not remove the guilt of one transgression. This divine virtue is peculiar to the blood of Christ. This is “ the

“ fountain opened to the house of David, and to the in-
 “ habitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.”
 Let the sinner “ take unto him nitre and much soap,
 “ yet his iniquity is marked before the Lord. Can the
 “ Ethiopean change his skin, or the leopard his spots ?
 “ No more can they that are accustomed to do evil
 “ learn to do well.”

The doctrine of a free justification is uniformly taught in Scripture. Hence it is written, “ by the deeds of “ the law there shall no flesh be justified in the sight of “ God :— man is justified by faith without the deeds of “ the law :— a man is not justified by the works of the “ law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ. By grace ye are “ saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is “ the gift of God. Who shall lay any thing to the “ charge of God’s elect ; it is God that justifieth, who “ is he that condemneth. In the Lord shall all the seed “ of Israel be justified, and shall glory.” It is unnecessary to multiply evidence.

Justification is likewise irreversible.

The nature of the gift itself, the perfection of the giver, and the declarations of Scripture, unite to confirm this comfortable truth. A gift becomes the property of the receiver, and he has a legal right to retain it. But the nature of the giver, in this instance, renders the donation still more secure. “ God is of one “ mind, and none can change him. He is not a man “ that he should change, nor the son of man that he “ should repent. Hath he said it and shall he not do “ it ; hath he spoken and shall it not stand.” Divine perfection implies immutability, and since God is perfect, he must be immutable in all his purposes. These

correspond to the excellence and perfection of his nature. Such is the view given of the character of God in the sacred oracles. There he is described as the “Father of mercies, with whom there is no variableness “nor shadow of turning, as one who resteth in his love, “for whom he loves he loves unto the end.”

Justification is likewise eternal.

The former view of justification includes this feature ; but to impress the comfortable truth the more strongly on the mind, I have expressed it in this manner. The duration of any favour adds to its intrinsic value. It would gall the mind, and diminish the joy of the justified one who had tasted the sweets of pardon, to entertain the slightest supposition of their termination. The perfection of the divine purpose, the perfection of Christ’s righteousness, and the natural unworthiness of the sinner, unite to secure the eternal duration of justification. If the faithful were first justified in consequence of their own virtue or merit, the continuance of the favour might then depend upon the same cause ; but as it was entirely owing to the mercy of God and the merit of Jesus, there can be no reason assigned why God should do so at all, which may not with equal strength be assigned for the continuance of this favour. “The mercy “of the Lord endureth for ever ;” and “Jesus Christ is “the same” meritorious Saviour “yesterday, to-day, “and for ever.” The permanent duration of justification is farther proved by sacred evidence. In Scripture, the churches are assured, that those “who have fled for “refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them shall “never come into condemnation, but are passed from “death to life.” In the blessed register of divine consolations, God himself declares, “I will be merciful

“ to their transgressions, and their iniquities will I remember no more.” Since these are the words of omnipotence and immutability, “ who can make his word of none effect?” The word of the Lord endureth for ever,” and this is the word of justification preached to the children of Adam in the gospel. The boldest and most expressive language is used in Scripture to denote this truth. Hence we hear the venerable king of Israel rejoicing in the stability of divine goodness, and saying, “ the Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy towards them that fear him ; as far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.” Can words more strongly teach this doctrine? As soon, saith divine veracity, shall these opposite extremes meet in one point, as the sins of the justified militate any more against them. Hence Jehovah himself says, “ the sin of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be *none*, and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found.”

Nay, more, the very oath of God is interposed, “ As I have sworn by myself,” saith the Lord, “ that the waters of Noah shall no more go over the earth to destroy it, so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy upon thee.” According to the doctrine taught in these words, the stability and permanent nature of justification surpasseth that of the heavens and

the earth: "they shall perish," but this "endureth; " they shall wax old as doeth a garment, but this retains its native strength and beauty." Their nature and duration are limited, but this unlimited. Such is the nature, and such the properties of that forgiveness implied in the justification purchased by the meritorious righteousness of Jesus Christ. Well then might the apostle give the bold challenge to every enemy, "who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is "God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is "Christ that died, yea rather who is risen again, and "who is even at the right hand of God, who also mak- "eth intercession for us. It is the unchangeable God "who justifieth; it was the Lamb of God who taketh "away the sin of the world" that "died for our offences, "and rose again for our justification, nay, who now "appeareth in the presence of God for us; wherefore he "is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto "God by him." Say then, is there any other judge or tribunal higher than God, to whom an appeal may be made to reverse the blessed sentence? There is none. Justification is therefore both irreversible and eternal. Chastise his children God *may*, but forsake them he never *can*. "Happy therefore are the people who "are in such a case, yea, happy is that people whose "God is the Lord."

But what is the *cause* of all this profusion of bliss?

The cause of this, similar to every other redeeming blessing, must be traced to the free and sovereign love of God; that all may redound "to the praise of "the glory of his grace." "In this purpose, which "God purposed in himself," it commenced. There it was resolved. From hence, the first dawning of com-

passion towards the ungodly beamed forth. It has pleased God, however, to confer this favour through the instrumentality of means. These are chiefly two, the righteousness of Christ, and divine faith.

There are few expressions used in the divine science, of more extensive and consoling import, than "the righteousness of Christ." Accurately speaking, the righteousness of Christ is of a twofold nature ; comprehending that inherent, infinite, and eternal rectitude which he possessth, as a divine person in the Godhead ; and that mediatorial righteousness, which he fulfilled or wrought out, as the Lord's righteous servant, and "the mediator between God and men." It is the latter of these two, by which the sinner is justified ; but at the same time, it derives its virtue and efficacy from the former. The divine, gives infinite value to the human. The mediatorial righteousness of Christ, includes all that Jesus performed in behalf of sinners. By his delighting in the council of eternity, to do the will of God, by undertaking our desperate cause, by assuming our nature, by obeying the law, and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. By these awful sufferings which he endured, both in his body and his soul ; by all those agonies and groans, which were the price of man's salvation ; nay, by his death, resurrection, ascension, and by his present intercessory work with the Father : by all these, the equitable demand of the divine law were amply satisfied, and a way opened, by which God might be declared "just, and "at the same time the justifier of the ungodly, who "believe in Jesus."

That the righteousness of Christ is the principal cause of justification, is uniformly taught in Scripture.

Such is the undeniable import of the following declarations of inspiration. Christ is denominated "the Lord "our righteousness." Paul, in the strongest terms, asserts, that by "his obedience, many shall be made "righteous." That the faithful "are justified by his "blood." That "there is redemption through his "blood, the forgiveness of sins." That "God made "him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might "be made the righteousness of God in him." *The righteousness of God!* Why? Because performed by God in human nature, because qualified to answer the utmost demands of God's law, because accepted by God in the room of the believer, and chiefly, because imputed by God himself to the sinner for his salvation. "God imputeth righteousness without works."

In exact correspondence to this view of the righteousness of Christ, all that he performed in human nature, he is said to have done for men. This doctrine was taught by the heavenly messenger, when he said, "his "name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." The man who was caught up into the third heaven, and who saw the visions of God, emitted his evidence in the following words. "He "gave himself a ransom for us; he hath redeemed us "from the curse of the law, by being made a curse for "us. Moreover, as the children were partakers of flesh "and blood, he himself likewise took part of the same." Another Apostle bears witness to this doctrine, when he says, "who his own self bear our sins, in his own "body on the tree." Paul, in another place, says, "that "Christ died for our offences, and rose again for our "justification." That "he hath gone into heaven, "there to appear in the presence of God for us." John,

the beloved disciple, also approaches with his evidence, saying, " My little children, these things I write unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Such is the account which the heavenly oracles give of this important doctrine.

In the nature of things, however, there must be an exact proportion between the cause and the effect. We have already beheld the nature of the divine law, and also the intrinsic evil of sin, and have found, that none but a divine person could redeem from the guilt, pollution, and power of sin. It has likewise been proved, that Jesus is a divine person, " the Fellow and the Equal of Jehovah, the Lord from heaven, Immanuel God with us." But should the question be put, how is the righteousness of Christ divinely and infinitely valuable, when it was his mediatorial righteousness which procured the justification of the ungodly? To this I answer, that, upon the plainest principles of reason, it has been proved, that whatever may be affirmed of any one of his natures, may, with strict propriety be affirmed of his person. Since, therefore both the divine and human nature were united in the person of our Lord, this union conferred infinite value upon his sufferings, and added infinite dignity to the whole of his mediatorial work. " It is the Altar that sanctifieth the gift." The divine gave infinite value to the sufferings of the human nature.

It was also mentioned, that faith enters into the cause of a sinner's justification.

How? By supplying the deficiency of Christ's righteousness? Or in any respect conjoined with it in a meritorious respect? The sacred oracles teach no such doctrine. To make faith, or repentance, or good works, the conditions or the perquisites of justification, is to dishonour God, and "to make the righteousness of 'Christ of none effect.'" The only station assigned to these graces in Scripture is that of a secondary nature.

It is a self-evident truth, that no man can be justified by the immutable law of God, unless he yield perfect obedience. It is equally evident, that since no human virtue can rise superior to the demands of the divine law, there can be no reversion of merit by which to procure a repeal of the sentence of condemnation merited by transgression. This difficulty is likewise increased by the guilt which is hereby accumulating, while the sinner remains unpardoned and unjustified. Correspondent to these ideas, we are taught that justification comes *through* faith, "and not by the 'deeds of the law.'" Hence, says Paul, "to him that 'worketh not, but believeth in him that justifieth the 'ungodly, his faith is counted unto him for righteousness.'" During the progress of his epistolary instructions, he, by various arguments, illustrations, and examples, teaches, that works have no merit in the justification of a sinner. He declares, that "they who seek "righteousness as it were by the works of the law, "stumble and fall, and have no benefit from Christ or "the gospel;" and that if any man or angel should "preach any other gospel, he would be accursed." Nay, every part of the Christian character and exercise is attributed to faith. By faith believers pass from death to life; they walk by faith in the paths of righteousness;

by faith they stand complete in Jesus ; by faith they work the works of righteousness ; during the course of their warfare they fight the good fight of faith. " And " this is the victory that overcometh the world, even " our faith." Nay, by faith the believer comes to God, receives the spirit, is sanctified ; and peace, stability, fruitfulness, comfort, and eternal life, are all represented as flowing from faith.

Since faith is of such consequence in Christian morality, it becomes a question of singular importance to ascertain its true nature.

In common language, faith signifies the credit given to a report, testimony, or promise, resulting from the confidence placed in the person who brings the report, emits the testimony, or makes the promise. It is obvious, that without the existence of such a principle, the business of human life could not be conducted. But if man gives credit to man, " the witness of God is greater ; the testimony of the Lord is sure." Faith therefore in the divine science is " the belief of the truth of " the gospel, or the substance of things hoped for, the " evidence of things not seen." Faith is a believing of the testimony of God contained in his word concerning past facts, present admonitions, and future promises. By embracing, realising, and expecting the promised blessings, it gives them an existence in the mind, and puts it in possession of " the things hoped for." Faith views the promise of God as equal to possession. In this manner faith receives the testimony of God not merely as true, but also as highly interesting : hence it becomes a powerful principle, inducing the believer " to flee " from the wrath to come," and to seek, with perse-

vering activity, " to enter into the rest that remaineth
" for the people of God."

But however important and beneficial this grace, the only work assigned to it in justification is that of receiving " the gift of righteousness ; hence denominated " a receiving of Christ, a believing on his name, a putting him on, a fleeing unto him as unto a strong tower." In fine, the merits of Christ procure the blessing, and the grace of faith takes hold of it. Faith is not the procurer, but the receiver. Such is the only honour that faith claims in the justification of a sinner.

In justification there is a glorious transfer. As the guilt of the faithful was imputed to Christ, so his righteousness is imputed to them. God the Father imputes the merit of Christ to the believer, the Spirit works faith in the soul to receive that merit ; and in this manner the Sacred Three are all engaged in the blessed work of justification. " God imputeth righteousness without works. Blessed is the man to whom God imputeth not transgression. He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." In the whole of this wonderful transaction, the glory of the Creator, the good of the creature, and the right of the divine law, are carefully consulted, and the design of justification declared to be, that " God might be *just*, and the *justifier* of him that believeth in Jesus," and at the same time " to him that worketh not, but believeth in him that justifieth the *ungodly*, his faith is *counted* for righteousness. In this *respect* there is no *difference*, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Faith in the righteousness of Christ is that alone which can save any sinner of Adam's race.

Many are the salutary effects of justification.

The perfections, government, and law of God are dignified, and the sinner saved. The inherent benevolence of the divine nature is manifested, by which God was induced to prepare a free salvation for guilty man, "to the "praise of his own grace." Divine justice is displayed, in that the least offence could not be forgiven without a perfect compensation. The wisdom of God is conspicuous by devising the method through which mercy might flow to the guilty without injuring the rights of truth, holiness, or justice. Yes, in this glorious act every perfection of the divine nature is dignified, and harmoniously unite in man's salvation.

The government of God is likewise vindicated in the justification of the ungodly.

Equity prevails in the divine government, in every transaction, and in every procedure towards the creature. A complete reward must be given to every meritorious action, and a complete punishment inflicted for every transgression. Contemplating the whole procedure upon every part, it will evidently appear, that the divine government is dignified by the satisfaction given by Jesus in the room of the faithful; that the sinner is overawed, the godly encouraged, the rights of virtue vindicated, and the great governor glorified.

Justification also produces the most salutary effects upon the human mind.

It leads to cultivate and improve some of the finer feeling and graces of the heaven-born soul. Humility is one of the brightest ornaments of the human character. This doctrine is eminently calculated to inspire this ennobling virtue. It excludes all boasting in human merit, and ascribes all glory to sovereign grace. The

uniform language of this doctrine is, “ What hast thou, “ O man, that thou hast not received? and if thou hast “ received it, why doest thou glory as though thou “ hadst not received it? who maketh thee to differ? “ what man can redeem his brother, or give to divine “ justice a proper ransom for his own guilt.” Certainly then all boasting is excluded, and the soul humbled in dust before God.

But humility is the parent of holiness. Every measure and degree of holiness proceeds from humility. Without humility there can be no holiness. A free justification also produces holiness, because it teaches to abound in good works. No faith can be genuine, but that which brings forth “ the peaceable fruits of “ righteousness.” When the person, however, that rejoices in the possession of pardon, reflects, that “ through “ the grace of the Lord Jesus,” he has been rescued from eternal misery, exalted to the favour of God, and filled with the expectation of endless felicity, his heart overflows with love to God, and studies “ to walk “ in all his statutes and commandments blameless.” When he remembers, that God “ spared not his own “ Son, but freely delivered him up to the death,” for his salvation, his heart is filled with gratitude, and constrained to obedience. In fine, this doctrine is calculated to inspire the noblest sentiments, and to rouse the devoutest emotions of the pious soul. To use the language of the great Witsius, “ The pious soul, who is “ deeply engaged in the devout meditation of these “ things, ought to break out into the praises of a justi- “ fying God, and sing with the church, Who is a God “ like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth “ by transgression! O! the purity of that holiness,

“ which would rather punish the sins of the elect in his
 “ only begotten Son, than suffer them to go unpunished !
 “ O the abyss of his love to the world, for which he
 “ spared not his dearest Son, in order to spare sinners !
 “ O the depth of the riches of unsearchable wisdom, by
 “ which he exercises mercy towards the penitent guilty,
 “ without any stain to the honour of the most impartial
 “ judge ! O the treasures of love in Christ, whereby
 “ he became a curse for us, in order to deliver us there-
 “ from.”

Finally, the afflicted soul, who is burdened with a load of guilt and misery, is entreated to realise the consolation, with which this doctrine is so amply stored. What though thy sins are numerous, and thy guilt great? “ behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away “ the sins of the world.” What though guilt and pollution stain thy character? “ the blood of Jesus cleanseth “ from all sin.” What though thine iniquity has reached to the heavens? the mercy of the Lord is above the heavens. What though difficulties and hardships await the timid believer? when Jesus “ is given for a “ leader, and a commander to the people.” In every situation, his wisdom, or power, or love, will attend until the justified soul arrive in glory.

LECTURE XV.

- The Doctrine of Adoption.

ROM. viii. 17. “*And if children then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.*”

A PROPER respect to the natural rights of mankind, constitutes an essential branch of virtue. This respect is encouraged and protected, by a variety of dispositions implanted in the human mind. Innocence, with a penetrating eye, discovers the common rights of man, and, with a delicate sensibility, abstains from the smallest violation of them. On the other hand, candour perceives the defects of the human character, and bewails their existence, but labours to conceal them from the public eye, and to prevent them from making an unfavourable impression upon the mind, respecting the conduct of the individual. Liberality ascends in the scale of virtue, and not only discovers the common rights of humanity, but also disposes the mind to allow every man to improve his own. Under her influence, the feelings of the heart begin to expand, and to display their pleasing effects, in civility, politeness, confidence, and esteem.

The fond esteem, and the strong attachment towards the different objects of affection manifested in the histo-

ry of the human mind, strongly mark the connection between inward feeling, and external conduct. The ardent esteem of the individual for his native country, known by the name of patriotism, prompts to many generous and noble actions. A predilection for the scenes of youth, and the companions of early years, has frequently paved the way to the practice of the most renowned virtues. But the strength and delicacy of the benevolent affections increase in proportion as they concentrate. Hence the feelings towards the society, with which the individual is connected, differs in strength from those towards the nation ;—the feelings towards his family, from these towards his society. By a similar progress, the benevolent affections proceed to select from the general group, a brother, a friend, or a companion, on which to pour the accumulated stores of a generous heart. But the natural affection, and endearing sympathy, which exists between the parent and the child, can scarcely be exceeded in strength, by any of the tender sympathies of human nature. There does not exist in language, any one term sufficiently appropriate, to express what constitutes the felicity included in the parental relation.

But the natural rights of man, originate from the rectitude of the divine nature ; therefore, all those virtuous dispositions, which are imperfect in the human character, shine forth in all their perfection, in the character of God. Nor can it be denied, that the more accurate our conceptions are of the natural rights of mankind, through their various gradations, until they concentrate in parental right, or natural affection, the more will the mind be prepared to make a proper estimate of the happiness of those who are selected from

among the degenerate family of Adam to be “the sons
“ and daughters of the Lord God Almighty.”

Amidst the endless diversity of characters which obtain in society, the two general divisions of the virtuous and vicious include the whole. In consequence of native depravity, man is now ushered into the world with a heart full of iniquity, and with the seeds of every base and criminal passion. Under the influence of these lawless passions, all mankind at first rank under the vicious class. In this deplorable state the chosen of God also remain until sovereign and irresistible grace “translates them out of the kingdom of darkness into the “ kingdom of God’s dear son.” Then a change of state is effected, and they are made “the children of God by adoption, and have the name, the nature, the dispositions, the honours, and the felicity of God’s children conferred upon them.

The word adoption admits of a copious interpretation. In general, it denotes the taking of a child out of one family and introducing him into another, and granting him all the privileges of a son or a daughter. Adoption may therefore be viewed under the following aspects: As civil,—metaphorical,—external,—and internal.

Civil adoption is a legal transaction, in which an opulent man takes a child from an inferior family, and, introducing him into his own, constitutes him his legal son and heir. This custom obtained among the Roman and Grecian states. When a man “went childless,” he selected one from another family, conferred upon him his own name, enjoined him never to return to his father’s house, and, by a public legal deed, declared him heir of all his property. Among the Romans this was done by the father, the son, and him who was about to adopt, ap-

pearing before the civil magistrate ; and there, the adopter, taking the youth whom he intended to adopt by the hand, said, before all present, " I avouch this person " to be my son, and I have bought him with my money." This he said, alluding to the affluence to which he was about to raise him. Then the natural father judicially resigned his property in his son to the adopter ; and the civil magistrate having adjudged him the son and property of the adopter, he was afterwards honoured with the freedom of the city, introduced into the adopter's family, and his name inrolled among the fraternity or tribe. But, lest the blood of the nobles should be stained by mingling with that of the commons, the partial and haughty law of the Romans laid severe restraints upon this custom.

The Greeks were a more free and generous people, and laid fewer restraints. Among them, this legal transaction was performed by a testament bequeathing the inheritance of the adopter to the person about to be adopted, and signing and ratifying the same in the presence of the civil magistrate. This legal transaction being finished, the youth was introduced into the family of the adopter, and instituted to every honour and privilege of a son born to the generous adopter.

But there is also a metaphorical adoption.

This is known by the name of ingrafting. When a branch is cut off from a tree or vine and ingrafted into another stock or root, then it is, in a metaphorical sense, adopted by that stock, and from it receives all its future nourishment and vegetable strength. This metaphorical adoption, however, differs from the civil in this respect, that the name, the quality, and the fruit originate from the twig which is ingrafted, and

not from the natural root or stock into which it is in-grafted.

When adoption becomes a divine act, and is applied to express the gracious kindness of God towards sinners, in bringing them out of the family of Satan into his own, and constituting them his children, it may be considered as of a twofold nature: external and internal. External adoption consists in God's taking a nation from among the other nations, or a family from among all the families of the earth, or an individual from among his companions, and bringing them into the visible church, and granting them the honours and privileges of his house. In this respect God adopted Abraham from among the inhabitants of Ur of the Caldees to be the father and founder of the Jewish nation. He adopted, from among all the families of the children of Israel, the family of Aaron to enjoy the honour of priesthood, and that of David to sway the royal sceptre. In this respect also he adopted the Jewish nation, from among the other nations, to be unto him for a church, and a peculiar people. Hence Israel was denominated his "son, even his first-born, to whom he shewed his word, "his statutes, and his judgment," and to whom he not only bequeathed the inheritance of the land of Canaan, but likewise granted the dominion over the other nations, saying, "let the people serve thee, and nations "bow down to thee, be thou lord over thy brethren."

At the dawn of Christianity however, when the gospel was preached to Gentile nations, they also were adopted into the church, and "made fellow-citizens of "the saints and of the household of God." In a similar manner, when the gospel is sent to any heathen country, and a church collected together, and the ordi-

nances of God dispensed, that church is externally adopted. Nay, more, when the word of God comes with power to the conscience of the man who was pursuing the criminal path of folly, and he is induced to mingle with the church of God, and found worthy, then he is externally adopted. It is a mournful fact however, that, nevertheless of all the circumspection that can be used, still hypocrites mingle with the people of God. "They are not all Israel who are of Israel." Many in every church are found retaining their natural relation to Satan, whilst at the same time they assume the name, and profess the religion of Jesus. Hence, that adoption which constitutes a part of actual reconciliation is *internal*; not consisting merely in the name and profession, but also in the reality and truth. "Not "outward in the flesh, but inward in the spirit." This is that adoption of which I am now to treat.

Reconciliation, justification, and adoption, may be distinguished in the following manner. In reconciliation, God is considered as the sovereign Lord, and the injured party, and the sinner as his enemy. In justification, Jehovah sustains the character of Supreme Judge, and man is considered as a criminal standing before his tribunal. In adoption, God is considered as the Father of mercies, and men as the children of Satan, and heirs of wrath. Or in reconciliation, the faithful are made friends; in justification pronounced righteous; and in adoption constituted heirs, and acquire a declared right to the eternal inheritance. Hence internal adoption may be defined, that "gracious and sovereign act of God, by which he receives "the guilty and forlorn sons of men, who are by nature "strangers and foreigners into the state, relation and

“ enjoyment of God’s children, through faith in Christ “ Jesus.” “ We are all the children of God, by faith “ in Christ Jesus.” This definition accords with the leading promise of the new covenant, in which God says, “ I will be to you a Father, and ye shall be my “ sons and daughters, saith the Lord God Almighty.”

This adoption is free and sovereign.

When the Roman or Grecian adopted one into his family from that of another, it must have been in consequence of free and sovereign pleasure, without any reward or ransom. In a similar manner, God in rich grace adopts sinners into his family, and makes them heirs of eternal life. But the pre-eminence belongs to the heavenly adoption. For in some, nay in many instances it would happen, that a child would be adopted in consequence of some excellence, either real or supposed, either personal or mental, but no such thing could affect the conduct of God. Man, in his own nature, and viewed in the eye of divine equity, had no natural amiableness, by which to recommend him to the favour of God; but he chose and adopted, merely of his own pleasure. Hence it is written, “ of his “ own will begat he us, that we should be a kind of “ first fruits of his creatures.”

When the Roman or Grecian adopted a child into his family, he did so by a solemn public deed; so in this spiritual adoption, God publicly declares his gracious act, not only to the conscience of the happy individual, when “ he reveals his Son in him,” but likewise to all the churches. Both the testament and oath of God confirm the adoption of the faithful. “ Where-“ in God willing more abundantly to shew unto the “ heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel,

“ confirmed it by oath: that by two immutable things, “ in which it was impossible for God to lye, we might “ have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, “ to lay hold upon the hope set before us.” In the view of all intelligent worlds, God has made known his purpose, of making his believing children heirs of the heavenly inheritance; and by a solemn deed, ratified by the precious blood of his own Son, he has transferred over to them the inheritance. “ O the height and “ the depth, the breadth and the length, both of the “ wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable “ are his judgements, and his ways past finding out.” Happy those who are put among the children. Nay, infinitely more happy, than if elevated to the highest station known among mortals.

When the Roman or the Grecian adopted a child into his family, he could not change his temper or dispositions. If stubborn or refractory, they would retain their original perverseness. The case however is different in respect of the adopted children of God, for when they are introduced into his family, their dispositions are changed, and their tempers meliorated. Then the most ferocious, refractory, and wild dispositions, are rendered tame, gentle, and placid. This change of dispositions is beautifully expressed, in the flowing language of the prophet Isaiah. “ The “ wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the “ leopard shall lye down with the kid; and the calf “ and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a “ little child shall lead them. And the cow and the “ bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down to “ gether, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And “ the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp,

“ and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all God’s holy mountain.” What an assemblage of images are here employed, to express that blessed change which God makes upon his children, when introduced into his holy mountain!

The various descriptions given of the character of God’s children, correspond with this of the prophet. “ They are said to be born of God.” “ They are admonished to put on as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, meekness, gentleness, patience.” Nay, they are represented as possessed of every amiable virtue, and divine excellence. Behold what the hand of the Lord has wrought, and what can he not perform? Well may the adopted of the Lord break forth into the language of John, and say, “ Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doeth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”

Did the Roman or Grecian, when he adopted, constitute the person his heir, and legally entitle him to his inheritance? So in adoption, God constitutes his children heirs of an inheritance that far exceeds all the wealth of Greece or Rome. Heirs of what? Of so much, that if divine veracity had not expressed it, man durst not. Heirs of all things. “ All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, and ye are Christ’s, and Christ

“ is God’s.” No language can afford a proper comment upon these words. They indicate all the rich liberality of God, the Father of mercies, the glory and grace of Christ, the heir of all things, and all these “ exceeding great and precious promises,” held forth in the gospel. In a particular manner, they include the possession of the world, of the spiritual kingdom, and of God himself.

Believers, through adoption, acquire a right to the possession of the whole world.

Abraham was emphatically called the father of the faithful; hence the term, *seed of Abraham*, is frequently employed to denote the community of the faithful. In Scripture, however, we find that “ to Abraham and “ to his seed it was promised, that they should be the “ *heirs of the world*.” The heirs of the world, not only in consequence of the promise, that “ in him, and in “ his seed, all the families of the earth were to be blessed,” but likewise, because through the adoption of children, they were to regain the forfeited right to the temporal kingdom. The comment of Ludovicus de Dieu, clearly illustrates this passage. “ As sin,” says he, “ by separating us from God, and subjecting us to “ his curse, banished and disinherited us, so that we “ have no spiritual right or dominion, as became Sons “ of God, over the meanest creature; on the other “ hand, when God becomes our God, and we his people, we are restored as sons, to the right and dominion of all our paternal inheritance; seeing there is “ nothing besides God and the world; we are made “ heirs of the world, both the *earthly*, the heavenly, “ the present, and the world to come.”

The Creator originally granted to man the possession and the dominion over this world; but having by transgression forfeited these, they have been ransomed by the blood and merits of Jesus for all his brethren. In consequence of this purchase, every son of God possesses as much of this world's property as his Father knows to be necessary both for the support of his animal life, and to nourish his spiritual life by inspiring his soul with holy emotions towards the bountiful giver. What although the child of God have a scanty portion of this world's goods, he enjoys a legal right to it, and also "the blessing of God, which maketh rich and addeth "no sorrow." His small crust, and single drop of water, is preferable to the most exquisite dainties of the profane voluptuary. Hence, said the king of Israel, "a "little that a righteous man hath is better than the "riches of many wicked." The soul of the pious man, contemplating the perfections and glory of the Creator displayed in all his works, ascends in devote meditation and holy joy to the adoration of uncreated excellence. Reflecting that the sun, moon, and stars, together with all the host of heaven, minister to his comfort; that this lower region with all its fulness are his own, what mingled sentiments of admiration, reverence, gratitude, and love, swell his bosom. This pleasing sensation is greatly increased, when he remembers the gracious declaration of his father, that "all things shall work to "gether for good to them who love God, and are the "called according to his purpose." All nature conspires to bless the favoured child. The angels, those spirits "who excel in glory and strength, are all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation." Nor can all the envy and malice of wicked

men, or infernal spirits, do them any real injury. Nay, under the goodness and care of God, "these shall tend " to their furtherance in faith and holiness."

But how does the doctrine, that the virtuous are the heirs of the world, accord with the undeniable fact, that many of them are clothed in rags, and almost destitute of the necessary supports of human life? To this I answer, that riches are only valuable when subservient to spiritual prosperity. The body is the servant of the mind. Hence, riches are not valuable either when they immoderately pamper the body, or encourage pride, haughtiness, vanity, or any of the baser passions of the mind. Farther, none can, in strict propriety of language, be said to enjoy or possess the world, who do not appropriate riches to those purposes intended to promote human felicity, and to glorify the bountiful Giver. Constant observation proves that extravagance is destructive. Nay, more, the righteous are only in their minority, and being under the wise direction of their heavenly Father, he knows best what portion of this world's goods is proper for them to possess. Children are not the proper judges of what is most advantageous. Nor does it in any degree invalidate the legal title to the inheritance, that the heir is, in the wisdom and prudence of the Father, intrusted with a small part of the inheritance during the years of his minority. When the poorest child of God arrives at the year of his majority, he will then enter into the full possession of the inheritance.

The sons of God have also a right to a spiritual kingdom.

In exact correspondence to this, Jesus said unto his disciples, "I appoint unto you a kingdom, even as my

“ Father hath appointed unto me.” Spiritual blessings in all their plenitude and importance are contained in the gospel dispensation, and believers are made partakers of them through the merits and atonement of Jesus. He, by a free grant, bequeaths to them all “ the sure mercies of David.” “ Behold the kingdom of God is “ within you.” Jesus dwells in their hearts by faith, and all the enriching graces of the Spirit dwell along with him. In this respect, it is said, “ hath not God “ chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs “ of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that “ love him.” Raised to such dignity, “ the righteous “ man is more excellent than his neighbour, and the “ king’s daughter is all glorious *within*. The peace of “ God, which passeth all understanding, fills the heart “ and mind through Christ Jesus.” In short, this spiritual kingdom includes the dominion of the holy soul over Satan, who shortly shall be bruised under his feet,—victory over the world in all its fascinating charms and chilling frowns,—victory over the domineering and turbulent passions of the heart, through the power and grace of him who “ subdues our iniquities under us:”—nay, who will in due time give the victory over every spiritual enemy, and even now maketh the godly “ always “ triumph.”

The adopted are likewise heirs of God himself.

Hence, says the Apostle, concerning believers, that they are “ heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.” Contemplating this glorious fact, it may well be said, what would the believer have more? nay, what can he obtain more? This article includes every thing which the mind can either conceive or hope to enjoy. All that excellence and perfection, which centers in God,

is the property of his adopted children. It certainly indicates, that all that which God can do for them will be done, and all that he can grant them will be conferred. "What is good the Lord will give, and he will "with-hold no good from them that walk uprightly." He will grant protection against every enemy. Hence the holy Psalmist exults, saying, "I will say of the "Lord, he is my refuge and my fortress, he is *my God* "in whom I will trust. Thou, O Lord, art a shield for "me, my glory, and the lifter up of mine head. I "will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that "have set themselves against me round about. The "Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I "fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom "shall I be afraid? when the wicked, even mine ene- "mies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, "they stumbled and fell. Though an host should en- "camp against me, my heart shall not fear." These different expressions denote the strongest confidence in the divine protection and favour. Originating from the same cause, and exulting in the same protection, the prophet Isaiah introduces Jehovah himself, as comforting his ancient church, saying, "Now saith the "Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed "thee, O Israel, fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I "have called thee by thy name, thou art mine; when "thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; "and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; "when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not "be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee; "for I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, "thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia

“ and Seba for thee.” Every element and every power, shall bend before the adopted of Heaven.

But the sons of God shall not only be protected from all evil, they shall likewise be put in possession of all good. This felicity is elegantly described, in the beautiful language of the king of Israel, who says, “ How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God, therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life, in thy light shall we see light.” Basking in the sunshine of divine favour, the soul shall experience the combined exertions of divine favour, to render it completely happy. And what can the human mind require more? Certainly every sentiment and feeling of the holy soul adopts the language of David, saying, concerning God, “ whom have I heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.” The mind cannot entertain the thought for a single moment, that God will with-hold any good thing from those to whom he has given *himself*.

Nor does the enjoyment of the kingdom depend upon any conditions, or pre-requisites which are meritorious in the heirs of promise. The testament by which the inheritance is bequeathed, consists of indefinite grants, and absolute promises. Repentance, faith, love, and all the other Christian graces, are promised in this testament, and make a part of the inheritance, and, during the time of their operation, they either confer the happiness of children, or prepare for greater enjoyment. In short, they are instrumental in the commencement and perfection of that character,

which becomes the dignity of the children of God. This imperceptibly leads the mind to attend to a subject, where the very essence of Christian practice and comfort is involved.

The existence and operations of the spirit of adoption.

The *Spirit of Adoption*, is the Holy Spirit of promise, refining and establishing the characters of the chosen, corresponding to the dignity of those who love God and are beloved by him. “And because ye are sons of “God, he hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son unto “your hearts, crying, *Abba Father.*” The Scripture speaks of the spirit of adoption, and also of the spirit of bondage. The latter represents God to the mind as an austere master and tremendous judge, and impels the sinner to obedience, through terror and dread. The former represents God to the mind, as a kind and indulgent father, and by inspiring confidence in his favour, and cherishing the hope of future felicity, constrains the holy soul with fervent alacrity and filial reverence, to obey God as an indulgent father. “We “have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, “but we have received the spirit of adoption, whereby “we cry, *Abba Father.*” The indwelling of this spirit is essentially necessary to the existence of genuine virtue. “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, “he is none of his.” Hence, this one and the same Spirit, operated in the ancient saints, as well as in the new. It was this Spirit that enabled the generous Caleb to *follow the Lord fully*, and of whom Nehemiah said, “thou gavest also thy good Spirit to instruct “them.” This certainly refers to the spirit of adoption, who operated in the hearts of the faithful, among the

children of Israel, even in the days of degeneracy and rebellion. Experiencing the same divine influence, and conscious of the blessed operations of the Divine Spirit, David prayed, saying, “ thy Spirit is good, lead “ me into the land of uprightness ;” and again, in that day of grievous backsliding, when he both stained his character and his throne, he, in all the penitential fervour of his soul, supplicated, saying, “ renew a right “ spirit within me ; take not thy Holy Spirit from me : “ uphold me with thy free Spirit.”

From the dawn of grace, the Spirit of adoption has dwelt in the faithful, instructing them in the knowledge of salvation, as far as then revealed, and leading them to accurate views of the method of reconciliation, made known by the partial and obscure hints given in the first ages of time. These views were naturally calculated to prevent the operations of the Spirit of bondage, and either to prevent or remove that fear and dread, which are the constant attendants of guilt, and also to inflame the heart with filial reverence and love. In this manner the mind was induced to obey, from the pure principle of grateful affection. Love inspires love. The mind must be convinced of the love of God before its generous emotions can begin to move in holy obedience towards him. Hence we find the ancient believers displaying all the blessed evidences of the spirit of adoption in their experience and conduct. One is heard rejoicing in the divine protection and favour, saying, “ Lord, “ lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me ; “ thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the “ time that their corn and their wine increased.” At another time we find the same saint delighting himself in God, and in full confidence, saying, “ the Lord is my

“ portion, saith my soul, therefore will I hope in him.” Nor were the effects of the spirit of adoption peculiar to any one saint, but we find them all in their measure and degree, and according to the circumstance in which they were placed, giving proof that the same spirit of faith, and love, and hope, and joy, operated in them all.

The numerous promises in the Old Testament, concerning the giving and the down-pouring of the spirit in the latter days, only indicate, that the operations of the spirit of adoption would then be more copious and visible. The baptizing with the Holy Ghost and with fire, mentioned by John the baptist; the down-pouring of the spirit upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost, and upon the Christians in the infancy of the church, were the accomplishment of these gracious predictions. These were the first fruits of the more abundant harvest. By the operations of the spirit under the gospel, clearer manifestations are given of the mystery of grace, a stronger display of divine benevolence, more confident boldness, more abundant consolations, more extensive knowledge, faith, love, hope, and joy.

Experience however proves, that the spirit was more abundantly conferred upon believers in the first age of Christianity than afterwards. Few can now, with accuracy and truth, in the same bold and confident manner, say with Paul, “ I am persuaded that neither death, “ nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, “ nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, “ nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to “ separate me from the love of God which is in Christ “ Jesus our Lord.” How strong also the consolation? how sweet the tranquillity of mind expressed in these

words to the Philippians, " In every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God ; and the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and mind through Christ Jesus." In a similar manner, Peter speaks of believers as " rejoicing with joy unspeakable, and full of glory ;" and John, of their being in possession of that perfect love " which casteth out fear." The history of the saints in that period, their ardent zeal, their steady fortitude, their keen activity, and their uniform piety, were illustrious proofs of the extraordinary fruits of the Spirit, who was then given them in an eminent degree. In these happy times God displayed what he *can* do for his adopted sons, and what he *will* again do when the glory of the latter day shall dawn.

Not that the power of the divine Spirit is less *now* than it was *then*. Let the very thought be held in everlasting abhorrence. " Who can limit the Holy One of " Israel ?" But since he cannot be limited in any degree, neither can he be limited to any extent of his influence. As he cannot be limited as to *quality*, neither can he be limited as to *quantity*. The influences of the Spirit are the same *now* as *then*. Their native energy and divine power, similar to himself, know no change. At the same time, he " distributeth to every man severally as he pleaseth." All men have not the same degree of faith and the other graces of the divine Spirit, although they are all under his care. And if the question is simply put, *why?* the answer is, because *we cannot limit the Holy One of Israel*. Who can say that the divine Spirit was not as well qualified to pour down his extraordinary influence upon the antediluvian world as

upon the apostolic church? Nor ought men to find fault although he does not now, as in the infancy of christianity, render the preaching of the same Gospel effectual to the conversion of thousands, as he did by the preaching of Peter. Let the churches continue to rejoice in their portion, and to supplicate for the more abundant descending of the Spirit, as in the days of old. His power is invariable.

The happy consequences of enjoying the spirit of adoption are both numerous and important.

The whole of an holy life, and all its consolations, flow from this source. In the following rich and consoling passage, Paul gives a summary of the consequences of adoption. Addressing the children of God at Rome by the endearing appellation of brethren, he says, "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh ye shall die; but if ye *through the Spirit* do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live. For as many as are *led by the Spirit of God*, they are the sons of God. "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage *again to fear*; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba Father. The Spirit itself *bear-eth witness* with our spirit that we are the children of God." Here the children are declared no longer debtors to lawless appetites and ungovernable passions, but through the power of the Spirit they have been enabled to conquer and subdue these base usurpers, and having been emancipated from their tyranny, they rejoice in the liberty wherewith Christ makes them free who are his; and, conducted by the dictates and influences of the Spirit, they give evidence that they are the sons of God. The apostle farther produces two wit-

nesses to prove the validity of the dignified relation: the one is the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba Father; and the other the testimony of our spirits bearing witness with the Spirit himself.

The Spirit beareth witness, by enabling to cry Abba Father. The Holy Spirit is always active in the faithful, not only in enabling them to bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness, but also qualifying the heart to "indite a good matter, and to speak of the things "concerning the King,"—nay, "causing the lips of "those who are asleep to sing." Nor does the Spirit teach to speak in a low, muttering, indistinct manner, indicating ignorance or timidity, but with a loud and distinct voice, indicating knowledge and boldness. "My sheep hear my voice, and a stranger they will not "follow." Hence, says the apostle, we cry Abba Father, significant of that earnestness, familiarity, freedom, boldness, and courage, with which the children of God approach the throne of grace. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we "obtain mercy, and find grace to help us in time of "need." In the Jewish commonwealth, servants were not permitted to call their masters by the name Father, but the servants of God are both taught and permitted to call him Father. When Jesus taught his disciples to pray "Our Father who art in heaven," he adopted a form of speech familiar among the Jews, who usually employed the following expression, "Our Father who "art in heaven, so deal with us as thou hast promised "by the prophets." How copious and endearing the appellation, *our Father*. Not only our Father, but also the Father of all the families in heaven and in earth, —of all the nations of the universe, but *our Father* in

a peculiar manner, by a new and spiritual creation, being created in Christ Jesus unto good, through whom God becomes the God and Father of all his adopted children. And unquestionably all those who adopt this language bring themselves under the strongest obligations to the reverence, obedience, and affection, due to a Father.

Nor is the evidence of the other witness to be neglected. “The Spirit itself beareth witness with *our* “*spirits*, that we are the children of God.”

Our spirit denotes the mind or conscience of every believer, by which he has a perfect knowledge of what operates in his own heart. Hence says the apostle, “What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man which is in him; even so the things of “God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now “we have received not the spirit of the world, but the “Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things “that are freely given us of God.” And in another place, “their conscience bearing witness, and their “thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing “one another.” To this fact also refer the words of John, “If our hearts condemn us not, then have we “confidence towards God.” The testimony of the Spirit is infallible, but our spirit is liable to err: therefore, that the evidence may be accurate, it is necessary that our minds be properly informed by the oracles of truth, what are the genuine marks of a child of God, and whether these marks exist in our character.

The genuine characteristics of a child of God, are of a twofold nature. The one a holy gracious habit of soul, manifested in the whole tenor of an holy life, and the other the peculiar displays of God’s favour, which he occasionally confers on particular believers.

The former consists in our resemblance to the image of God, and a conformity to our heavenly Father: “ Be “ followers of God as dear children.” A son generally resembles a father, and one brother resembles another. The only begotten Son of God, “ is the brightness of “ his glory, and the express image of his person ;” and in their measure and degree, the younger sons of the family, are all created after the image of God, in “ righteousness and true holiness.” It is also natural for man, to assimilate the manners of those with whom he associates; therefore, their frequent interviews with their father and elder brother, together with the rest of the adopted family, tend to perfect the holy resemblance. Imitating the manners of the family, “ they “ walk worthy of the Lord, unto all well-pleasing.” As the elder brother said, that he “ could do nothing “ of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for “ what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son “ likewise ;” so, also, the rest of the children, in their measure and degree, imitate the conduct of their heavenly Father. But as it is natural for a son to resemble and imitate a father, so it is equally natural for a son to love a father. This law is congenial to human nature. That son deserves not the tender appellation, who does not love his father. But filial affection rises to high superiority in all the adopted children; hence they are said to have their love “ made perfect.” The strength of affection, is in general proportioned to the natural affection of the father, or to the kind offices received. In both these respects, the strongest foundation is laid for the perfection of love in the children of God. God is love itself, and who can recount the multitude of his favours.

Obedience is also the constant companion of filial affection towards their heavenly Father, by endeavouring to walk in “ all his statutes, and in all his ordinances blameless.” The daily exertions of human nature, also show, that it is natural for one brother to love another. This feature of the adopted character is likewise displayed, by “ an unfeigned love of the brethren.” Hence said Jesus, “ Hereby shall all men know that ye “ are my disciples, if ye love one another.” Numerous are the exhortations to brotherly love, which are founded upon this saying of our Lord : “ Let brotherly “ love continue. See that ye love one another with a “ pure heart fervently. Bear one anothers burdens, “ and so fulfil the whole. Be kindly affectionated one “ to another.” Nay, such is the importance of this virtue, that our Saviour mentions it as the distinguishing mark of his disciples. “ Hereby shall all men “ know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.”

Taking a combined view of the explicit evidence afforded by these two witnesses, in all its strength and convincing power, a strong foundation is certainly laid, for “ joying in God, and rejoicing in the God of “ our salvation. Rejoice in the Lord ye righteous, and “ again I say rejoice. For ye have not received the “ spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received “ the spirit of adoption, whereby ye cry, Abba, “ Father.”

But an important question demands our attention, before we take leave of this pleasing subject. If such are the blessed effects of the spirit of adoption, witnessing with the spirits of the faithful, how comes it to pass, that they are sometimes sorrowful and sad in heart :

The changing experience of the people of God, together with the means of their restoration and comfort, are beautifully expressed in the following passage. “ Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God ? Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary, there is no searching of his understanding ; he giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fail ; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not weary, and they shall walk and not faint.” The structure of this passage, is founded upon the radical idea, that the believer may sometimes experience the hidings of his Father’s countenance ; that he may faint, have his spiritual strength diminished ; nay, that those who in consequence of their graces may be compared to young men, even they shall faint, be weary, and utterly fall. The prophet labours to comfort the persons placed in such circumstances, from the eternity, omnipotence, and immutability of God, who giveth power to the faint, who increaseth strength to them that have no might, and who reneweth the strength of those who wait upon him. Unquestionably, all this indicates in the strongest manner, that changes enter in the experience of the christian. But in the conclusion of this passage, the matter is placed beyond all controversy. There three distinct classes are mentioned ; one who in consequence of high elevation, and sweet

communion, mounts upon wings as eagles ; another who in consequence of divine life, runs and is not weary ; and a third less favoured, who only walks and does not faint.

The same fact is referred to in another place, where the prophet admonishes him that walketh in “ darkness, and has no light, to trust in the name of the “ Lord, and stay himself upon his God ;” and when David complained in the bitterness of his soul, saying, “ Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art “ thou disquieted within me ? still trust in God, for I “ shall yet praise him who is the health of my counte-“ nance, and my God.” And upon another day when he mourned, saying, “ Will the Lord cast off for ever ? “ will he be favourable no more ? hath he in anger for-“ gotten to be gracious ? hath he in anger shut up his “ tender mercies ? ” Similar was the experience of the patient Job, who said, “ O that it were with me as in “ months past, in the day when God preserved me, “ when the candle of the Lord shone upon my head, “ and when by his light I walked through darkness.” Not to enumerate all the instances which might be mentioned, Paul also one day exclaimed, “ O wretched “ man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body “ of this death.”

But farther, did not Jesus receive an express commission, “ to bind up the broken heart, to comfort all “ that mourn, to appoint unto them that mourn in “ *Sion*, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy “ for mourning, the garments of praise for the spirit of “ heaviness ? ” Would the wisdom of heaven have given such a charge to Jesus, if there were no mourning and sorrowful believers ? Nay, did not even Jesus himself

experience the hidings of his Father's face, when he complained, saying, " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" These things refer to a variety of *feeling*, and not a change of *relation*. The latter is invariable, but the former fluctuating. Those who say that they have no doubts and fears, can have no necessity for the numerous admonitions and consolations with which the Scriptures are so amply stored ; and it becomes them to assign the reason, why these constitute a part of the sacred record, if the experience of the people of God proves them useless. May I, without offence, address such in the language of inspiration : " And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him : for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons, for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons."

Nor let it be imagined, because I defend the cause of the sorrowful in Zion, that I intend to encourage a gloomy, doubting, desponding turn of mind. That be far from my pen, thus to teach. There is a material difference between duty and its performance, and between the *feeling*, and the *state* of a believer. Every child of God has good cause to rejoice ; but alas, through infirmity he does not always so. " Strengthen, therefore, O adopted one, the things that remain, which are ready to die. Cast not away your confidence. Walk circumspectly, and be careful not to offend your heavenly Father : then shall your path be like the shin-

“ ing light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. Covet earnestly the best things. War a good warfare; lay hold on eternal life. For, being now heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, it is but a little while, and then you shall enter into the full possession of the inheritance.”

In your patience possess your souls. Murmur not because your Father sometimes hides his face. He does not correct willingly, nor grieve the children of God, but for their profit, that they may be made partakers of his holiness. His chief design, in all the afflictions, and sorrows, and calamities, and chastisements of his children, is to do them good in the latter end. Give praise therefore to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

LECTURE XVI.

Of Sanctification.

1. THESS. v. 23. “ *And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly.*”

IN the arrangement of things, the cause and the effect are uniformly of the same nature. The productions of God must therefore correspond to his perfections. But he is divinely pure ; hence he cannot produce impurity. It is however universally granted, that God is the Creator of all things ; how then did moral impurity enter his fair creation ? Both his nature, and the constant assimilation between cause and effect, unite their evidence to prove that moral impurity did not originate from him. The sacred account of the formation of man corresponds with this reasoning. “ And God said, Let “ us make man in our image, and after our own like-“ ness.” Hence, since man was formed after the image of God, he must either have been originally holy, or God is not naturally and essentially holy. Every idea, however, which the human mind can form of his nature, either from the works of creation, or the volume of inspiration, tends to prove, that he is naturally and essentially holy. But since it has been found, that the

assimilation between cause and effect in no instance changes its nature, it must follow, that man was perfectly holy when he came from the Creator's hand.

But holy man was formed a free agent, and left to exert that freedom of action without any necessary compulsion. Thus favoured with freedom, he perverted the heavenly gift, and, by disobeying the positive command enjoined, opposed the will of his Maker. Because God was good, he became evil. Because God left him to the freedom of his own will, he soon arrived at that degree of arrogance, that he seemed to wish the divine Will subservient to his own unhallowed prejudices.

From this base act of rebellion originated moral depravity, and not from the Author of universal existence.

Impurity however having thus entered, it necessarily follows, by the uniform connection between cause and effect, that every child of Adam is now ushered into the world contaminated with guilt. Every fountain sends forth streams of its own quality. "Who can bring a "clean thing out of an unclean? no not one. Can corruption produce holiness?"

It is also evident by the same chain of reasoning, that as God can neither produce, nor impart impurity, neither can he have fellowship with the workers of iniquity. An assimilation of nature, of feelings, of sentiments, and of pursuits, are absolutely necessary to reciprocal comfort and mutual enjoyment. "How can two walk "together except they be agreed?" Therefore, either the nature of God must change, or the nature of sinful man, or no comfortable intercourse can ensue. Both impossibility and absurdity attend the changing of God's nature; hence, the nature of depraved man must be

changed, before he can taste the sweets of divine communion. Of this change of man's nature I am now to treat, or concerning the Sanctification of the human soul.

Justification and adoption denote a relative change of state; sanctification a real change of heart. These are instantaneous, this progressive. These are accomplished in consequence of a righteousness which is external, this in consequence of a holiness which is internal. These disarm sin in its destructive, this in its reigning power. These are perfected on earth, this cannot be perfected until the holy soul arrives in the land of glory.

The relative importance of sanctification, appears from its being represented in scripture as the chief end of eternal election, that men should be holy "through "the sanctification of the Spirit." It is also represented as composing a leading and distinguishing blessing of the covenant of grace. "This shall be the covenant "that I will make with the house of Israel, after these "days, I will put my law in their inward parts, and "write it in their hearts, and I will take away the "hard and stony heart, and I will give them a heart "of flesh." It is likewise represented as a precious fruit of redemption by the blood of Christ, "that he "might sanctify and cleanse the church." In a word, as the design of God in regeneration, and the general aim of adoption, and as absolutely necessary in order to glory. These great and important considerations combine to prove its high eminence in the scale of redemption.

The term *to sanctify*, has various acceptations in the sacred oracles. To dedicate to an holy purpose. Thus

the seventh day, the tabernacle and all its vessels, Aaron and his onss, the priests and the Levites, the apostles and ministers of the New Testament, the wa-ter in baptism, and the wine in the Lord's Supper, are all said to be sanctified, because separated from a common to a religious purpose. To sanctify, also signifies a preparation for the solemn exercises of de-votion. Thus, at the giving of the law, at the di-viding of Jordan, and on various other occasions, the people of Israel were commanded to sanctify them-selves. To sanctify, also signifies that holy fear and devout reverence, which man ought to cherish towards the great Lord of all. "Sanctify the Lord God of "Hosts in your hearts;" and to sanctify, denotes the invisible and gracious work of removing the moral pol-lution of the soul of man. Hence the word to sancti-fy, or sanctification, is complex and extensive in its meaning, and expressive of that divine operation, by which the soul is renewed in the image of God; and by this one word, is conveyed to the mind the idea of one who sanctifies, a person who is sanctified, the work of sanctification itself, and the happy conSEQUEN-ces of the gracious operation.

To enlarge our ideas upon this subject, it may be remarked, that sanctification is both initial and pro-gressive. *Initial* sanctification, is the descending of the Divine Spirit, with all his celestial influence, to take possession of the human soul.—His gracious sow-ing of the seeds of glory in the guilty mind.—His making a partaker of the divine nature;—and making a provision for escaping the pollutions that are in the world. His renewing the whole soul, by giving a dif-ferent direction to all the powers and faculties of the

mind, whether active or moral ; or his creating a-new in Christ Jesus, and forming the guilty soul in the likeness of the divine image. Similar to justification and adoption, this initial sanctification is instantaneous and perfect at once.

But there is also a *progressive* sanctification. This is the watering of the holy seed, by the descending influence of the divine Spirit. The gradual weakening and diminishing the strength of corruption, and of innate depravity. The dying to sin, and living to holiness. The continued energy of the Lord the Spirit, whereby the happy possessor of initial sanctification goes on from strength to strength, forgets the things which are behind, and reaches forth to those things which are before, presseth towards the mark of the high calling, and increaseth with all the increase of God.

But the Understanding, the Will, and the Affections, are the leading faculties of the mind, and these are all renovated in the blessed work of sanctification. The first of these is the *Understanding*, which discovers truth, compares evidence, and determines to conduct. In as far as it can be discovered, the illumination of the Understanding commences the work of sanctification. By this illumination the clouds of moral darkness are expelled, and the mind enabled to behold the heavenly sky, and all its celestial glories. Then the light of the glory of God, in the face or person of Jesus, darts its cheering rays into the darkened heart. The immediate and happy effect of this illumination is, that the soul beholds God in all the perfection of authority and love, together with the consequent duties it owes to him, as the Creator and universal Lord. It also strengthens and qualifies the mind to behold sin in

its vile deformity and baseness, and thereby conviction is produced. God first produced light in the natural, and he first produces light in the spiritual world. The nature of things demand this order, and the scripture proves its existence.

But what is the mean or the medium of this illumination? Does God produce this by the powerful and immediate act of his own mind, or by the instrumentality of means, and second causes? That he can, and has sometimes done this by a miraculous exertion of his own unlimited power is certain; but the usual method is, by the instrumentality of causes; and the great mean is the word of God, read, heard, or preached.

The word is the glass or mirror, in which both the native excellence of God, and the vile evil of sin are beheld. A man cannot behold his own face, except in water, or in a mirror or glass; so man cannot behold his own sin, unless in the waters of the sanctuary, or in the mirror of the divine word. Since glasses have a magnifying quality, so the word of God causes the soul to behold sin in all its extensive criminality. There are some objects so small, that their existence cannot be perceived without the aid of a glass; so there are many sins, whose existence is unperceived by the mind, until aided by the glass of God's word. Some objects are so distant, that they cannot be perceived by the naked eye, they however can be brought near and into distinct vision by the aid of glasses; so the word of God brings the future and distant objects of eternity, in all their reality and importance, near to the view of the enlightened soul. And as no object can make any impression upon the mind, unless it be

perceived; so eternal and future things can make no impression upon the heart and conduct, unless discovered by the glass of the Divine word. Hence is that beautiful description of illumination, "We all with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord: we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even by the Lord the Spirit." The words of a man convey his thoughts to another; so the word of God conveys his thoughts to mankind. The thoughts of a man correspond with the quality of his heart. The thoughts of God are similar to his nature; and as that nature is transcendently glorious, so the glory of God's wisdom, power, justice, holiness, mercy, and love, shine forth in his word. But the native effect of discovering the majesty and holiness of God, is to lead man to the cultivation of holiness. The truth discovered will lead both to purity and obedience. Hence it is written, "Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth." The obeying the truth is here celebrated as the cause; and purifying as the effect. The same reasoning applies to that expression, "sanctified by the truth." To this also Christ refers, when he prays his Father, saying, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth;" and also when he informed his disciples, saying, "Now ye are clean through the words which I have spoken unto you." Nay more, the word, and the glorious holiness of God, shining in that word, is said to be of an assimilating nature. "We, beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory." The word shows the glory of God: the sight of God's glory produces hatred of sin; and hatred of sin produ-

ces an ardent desire to abstain from all appearance of evil: therefore the sight of God's glory makes the soul more and more holy, or progressively to go on from glory to glory. The perfection of this sight, and the assimilating effect of the same, are indicated in that passage: "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then we shall be like him." Why? "For what reason? or by what cause?" For we shall *see him* as he is. The very sight of him shall make us like him. Hence the effect of the word of God in illuminating the understanding, both to begin and to perfect the work of sanctification.

The second principal faculty of the mind is the *Will*. This is that faculty by which we choose and refuse, or prefer one thing to another. The intrinsic nature of God, and the sacred narrative, prove that man was originally formed with an inclination to perform the will of God; or he chose what was agreeable to God, and refused the contrary. No sooner, however, did man abuse the freedom which God conferred, than his will received a wrong direction; and being perverted, became stubborn and refractory; chose the evil, and refused the good. But in the blessed work of sanctification, this perversion is removed. That enlightening, of which I have already spoken, discovers the things which are more excellent; and divine influence inclines to obey the will of God, or to choose the things which are more excellent. With a gentle, but overpowering energy, the soul is captivated with the love of holiness, and thus bends to the divine will. No longer it resists the will of God, but instantly cries, "Lord, what will thou have me to do?"

The *Affections* are the third leading faculty of the soul, and these also are sanctified. The appetites, which were formerly sensual and grovelling, are now sanctified, and made meet for the Master's use. "Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof: neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments unto God." But not only are the ruder desires and appetites purified, but also the more laudable desires of knowledge; esteem of power, and mental superiority, are all dedicated to the altar of God. No longer do selfish and malevolent principles move the affections, but true benevolence and the most disinterested love. Nay, the affections are placed upon things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. "Our conversation is in heaven." The whole man is renewed: the whole soul sanctified; "and the very God of grace sanctify you *wholly*; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

But by whom is this sanctification effected? To this I reply, That this is not the production of the sinner himself. As soon shall pollution cleanse pollution, as a man purify his own heart. The view which has already been given of this work, proves that it is infinitely above the power of any creature; and as the sinner is neither disposed nor qualified to change his own heart, neither are angels disposed or qualified. Nay, quite the reverse. Their temptations and malevolent exertions are uniformly employed to detain the soul

under the dominion of pollution. Nor can the good angels, however much disposed, produce this important change. No created strength is equivalent to the arduous work. Therefore the sacred oracles declare, that, in order to the introduction of moral purity into the human soul, no less a power is necessary than to create a world, or raise a person from the dead. Yet, however lightly some men esteem holiness, no less an exertion of power is necessary to its production, than the combined effort of the sacred Three, who bear record in Heaven, "Sanctified by God the Father; sanctified in Christ Jesus; through sanctification of the Spirit."

But although it is the combined effort of the sacred Three, yet as it is the peculiar work of the Father to elect, the Son to redeem, so it is the peculiar work of the Holy Ghost to sanctify. In the most explicit terms this work is ascribed to the Holy Ghost in numerous passages; but one from the writings of Paul may serve as an example. "In this one thing (says he), I am confident, that he who has begun a good work, will carry it on until the day of Christ." Here the beginning, the progress, and the perfection of holiness, are all ascribed to the Divine Spirit. Under the operation of the celestial Agent, the soul is wholly passive in the act of initial sanctification. Dead in trespasses and sins, similar to a dry bone mouldering in the tomb, man is as incapable to produce holiness in his soul, as to infuse life into a dead corpse; and although in progressive sanctification he is active in the use of the destined means, yet, for their purifying energy, these entirely depend upon the Divine blessing; and consequently sanctification is wholly the work of the Lord the Spirit. He only can

qualify the soul to bring forth in abundance the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

But since different sentiments are entertained concerning the nature of good works, a few hints may be offered about the enquiry, "*What constitutes a good work?*" By the rules of moral estimation, it appears necessary to constitute a good work, that it flow from a proper motive. Can a polluted fountain send forth pure streams? Can a corrupted and base motive send forth a pure and good action? Divine veracity assures us, that "out of the heart are the issues of life;" by consequence the heart must first be pure, before it can produce a pure motive. Pure motives issuing from an unsanctified heart, is an absurdity in morals. But what is that specific motive which will constitute an action morally good? It is unfeigned love to God. "Love is "the fulfilling of the law." Hence whatever does not proceed from a pure principle of love, is not the fulfilling of the law.

To constitute an action good, it must also be done from a respect to a proper rule. The rule of all genuine morality, is the scriptures of truth. The moral law there contained, is the only immutable standard of human conduct. What can be the value of any duty unless commanded? What can be its intrinsic excellence unless commanded by God's law? Let man do what he pleaseth, unless the same is enjoined by divine authority, all will be only reprobate silver. Nay, let him "give his first born for his transgression, and the "fruit of his body for the sin of his soul; let him give "all his goods to feed the poor, and his body to be "burned;" if these are not commanded of God, still

the voice may be heard that will pierce the heart ; who hath required this at your hands, saith the Lord ?

Nor is this all ; the aim in every action must be good, “ before the action itself can be good. Whatsoever ye “ do, do all to the glory of God.” As this is the great design of God in all his works, so it ought to be the constant aim of man in all his. Why did God pronounce the creation good ? Because it tended to illustrate his divine perfections. Why is the work of providence good ? Because there the eternal purposes of infinite wisdom are unfolded, and “ he that observes these things shall “ understand the love and kindness of the Lord.” Why is the work of redemption good ? Because there the exceeding riches of his glory are displayed in honouring the divine perfections, the divine law, the divine government, and at the same time saving the sinner.

From this chain of thought it is evident, that to constitute a good work, it must be done from a right principle ; the love of God by a right rule, the law of God to a right end, the glory of God. But none can so act without divine influence, therefore the commencement and continuance of good works are the production of the Holy Spirit.

But since the production of holiness in the human soul is a progressive work, what are the means and motives by which the spirit conducts this process to its perfection ? Often the wrath of man is made to praise God ; so also the consequences of sins are often made to produce holiness. It will readily be granted, that personal, domestic, and public calamity are all the consequences of sin. Nor can it be denied, that these are frequently rendered subservient to the purifying of the

soul. "No affliction for the present is joyous, but "grevious, but afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable "fruits of righteousness. All the fruit thereof is to "take away sin. It hath been good for me that I was "afflicted; before I was afflicted, I went astray." The fatherly chastening of heaven has been productive of abundant and holy fruit. He feeds his people with the road. By this he nourishes their various graces, and quickens their holy activity. "If my children "forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if "they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgressions with the "rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my "loving kindness will I not utterly take from them, "nor suffer my faithfulness to fail."

The prosperous events of providence have also a meliorating and purifying effect. When the Lord prospered King Jehosaphet, his heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord. Such ought, and, when properly exercised, such will be their effect upon every holy mind. In the hand of the divine spirit, the word of God is peculiarly useful. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting "the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making "wise the simple. Thy word is a light unto my feet, "and a lamp unto my path. The Spirit himself shall "bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I "have said unto you. He shall take of the things "which are Christ's, and shall shew them unto you." Both the reading and the preaching of the word are rendered effectual by the Divine blessing, to promote the interests of true holiness. Nor ought the pleasant work of commemorating the death of Christ, together

with all its happy effects, to be forgotten in the enumeration of the means employed to carry on the work of sanctification to perfection. But how noble and elevated are the motives presented in the heavenly page to excite to holiness? Behold the direful slavery and wretchedness from which believers have been rescued! Behold the long-suffering, forbearance, and mercy, and patience, and love and grace of God, exercised towards his children. Behold his distinguishing grace in all its unmerited and holy energy. Behold the invaluable price paid for the redemption of the chosen, and the infinite compassion and love which beam from the cross of Jesus. Behold the Divine Spirit in all his illuminating, convincing, renewing and perfecting influences, waiting to sanctify, together with all the countless benefits conferred, and then say how strong the Gospel motives, which invite to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly towards ourselves, righteously towards our brethren, and godly towards the Fountain of Holiness!

Do thy actions, O man! indicate the unpurified state of thy mind? Be entreated calmly and seriously to ponder the path of thy goings. Where does this path tend? To heaven it never can lead. Both the way and the place are holy. "It shall be called the "way of holiness. Without holiness no man shall see "the Lord." Divine impossibility, O polluted man, bars the gates of glory against thee. Thou art unholy, therefore thou canst not be happy. No happiness devoid of holiness. Why is God divinely happy? Because perfectly holy. Why are angels happy? Because they are holy. Why are the spirits of the just

happy? Because they have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Why are the heirs of glory now happy, and rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God? It is because their vile nature is changed, and the work of holiness is begun and carrying on in their souls. Be assured then, that unless you also experience this change of heart and conduct of which I have now spoken, you shall not taste of happiness. Flee then to the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. Now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation.

Ye sons of purity, how blissful and comfortable is your situation. Sweet communion with God, your heavenly Father, is already begun; and neither death nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate you from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus. God is holy, therefore happy; he has made you holy, that you also may be happy. Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous; rejoice ever more; give glory to the Father, to the Son, and to the Divine Spirit, Amen.

LECTURE XVII.

The Evidence of an Actual Participation of Redemption.

ROMANS viii. *For I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, nor
angles, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things
to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able
to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

IGNORANCE is the companion of depravity. Depravity has both darkened and enfeebled the human understanding. In the days of innocence, the mind was capable of receiving endless stores of knowledge, and of discerning the existence of truth with one intuitive glance: but a sad reverse has now taken place in the capacity and mental powers of man. To remove the natural darkness of the mind, “there must now be line upon line, and precept upon precept.” Images, and allusions, and resemblances, must be borrowed from surrounding nature, to convey the information necessary to human comfort. The difficulty increases in attempting to inform the mind concerning spiritual things. In this field, all the powers of mind, and the various methods of conveying instruction, are necessary to impart a competent knowledge of the great things which belong to human felicity.

Knowledge is the fountain of genuine religion. But ignorance of religion is now natural to the human mind. No religion, however, can exist without the proper knowledge of God, and as this is not natural to the human mind, it must be conveyed by external information. It is farther obvious, that this information must be supported by authentic evidence, before it can be of any real utility to the human mind. Every kind of evidence is divided into two branches. Intuitive and deductive. Intuitive evidence is that kind which is understood by the mind, immediately upon its being presented without any laborious investigation. The simple mentioning of the fact is sufficient to obtain the assent of the understanding. Under this branch of evidence is comprehended that of axioms of consciousness, and the fundamental laws of human belief.

Deductive evidence is that kind, acquired by a regular chain of thought, proceeding from obvious and acknowledged principles, to those more obscure and not so readily acknowledged. This kind of evidence, therefore, embraces a wider range, and is divided into two kinds, denominated probable and certain. The subject now before us admits of a mingled proof, ascending in the scale of evidence from probable to certain.

The term *Redemption* is expressive of all that God has done to prepare salvation, and also the effect which that salvation produces upon the tempers and characters of its happy possessors. It includes the purposes and counsels of the Eternal Three, the humiliation and sufferings of Christ; together with the influences and grace of the Divine Spirit. Our present inquiry,

however, respects the effects which redemption produces upon the tempers and characters of those who have experienced its salutary influence. What then are the essential and constituent parts of salvation, concerning the existence of which the present inquiry is stated?

Distinguishing grace is one of the radical parts of redemption.

How then may a believer obtain the certain knowledge of the distinguishing love of God towards his soul? Or is this knowledge in itself a possible thing? The all important question then occurs, *How may this be acquired?* It has been found, that *election* is the gracious and eternal act of God, by which he has ordained some to everlasting life, through the merits of Jesus, and the sanctifying influences of the Divine Spirit. Hence it is obvious, that no mortal can penetrate into the secret counsels of heaven, to ascertain "the names" of those who are written in the Lamb's book of life. "Such knowledge is too wonderful; man cannot attain unto it." The only mode of knowledge within his reach, is that of discovering the *cause* by the *effect*. The fruits of election declare its existence to the conscience, and to the churches. A similitude may tend to illustrate this doctrine. Behold yonder huge and extensive building—Contemplate its thick strong and massy walls—Mark its proportion, symmetry, elegance, grandeur, and elevation.—These are all observable to the naked eye; but the foundation lies concealed in the ground. This foundation is unseen, and also the materials with which the building commenced; yet

their existence cannot be doubted. It is impossible, in the nature of things, that such an elegant structure could been reared without a foundation. The existence of the invisible, is as certain as that of the visible. Such is the case with distinguishing grace. This fact was finely illustrated by the sacred writer who said, " As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed." The scripture positively acquires the fact, that faith is known by works. There are likewise a variety of other graces connected with faith, in forming the character of a believer, which are easily perceived. Of this number are unfeigned sorrow for sin, a uniform avoiding " of all appearance of evil," an increasing desire after holiness, a supreme love to God, a sincere love to his children, a heart weaned from the world, and longing for heaven and glory. These compose the super-structure of which election is the foundation. Now it is asked, if any building can stand without a foundation? No more can these exist in any character, unless election previously exist. The one is the cause, and the other the effect. The effects can never appear unless the cause has produced them. The conclusion is undeniable, that the effects prove the existence of the cause equally with that of their own. Yes, the person who displays these graces and dispositions in his character, may with " assured confidence" know, that he is of the happy number destined to coming felicity. The general error concerning this matter, originates from the mode in which men wish to ascertain this glorious fact. They unwisely seek to dive into the secret things " which belong God," instead of attending unto that

evidence which he has condescended to vouchsafe concerning this matter. The truth of this fact is discovered by tracing back, by the guidance of the streams to the fountain. Election emits streams which ascertain its nature.

The internal call of the spirit is also one of the essential branches of salvation. In the discussion of this subject, it has been found that the call of the gospel is either external or internal. The external call is obvious at once, and the internal may be discovered by that mode of reasoning adopted concerning election. This calling is denominated an heavenly and an holy calling ; hence wherever it has been experienced, it will certainly bring forth holy fruit. "A tree is known by its fruits." In this instance, as well as in election, all they who have obeyed the internal call of the gospel, depart from iniquity, and follow on to know the Lord more and more.

Justification is also an essential branch of redemption.

The leading features of justification were formerly delineated ; and from these it is obvious, that they carry their internal evidence along with them. There are specific marks connected with this, as well as with every other redeeming benefit. Wherever these are beheld, the existence of justification is manifest. Such were the sentiments of Paul, who, after having proved the reality, and illustrated the nature of justification, thus infers, "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have " peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. He is " our peace, who hath made both one, and hath reconciled us to God by his own blood, having forgiven all

"trespasses." Peace with God certainly implies the enjoyment of his favour. Nor is it possible that this favour can be enjoyed without loving God supremely, and obeying him sincerely. It is equally evident, that this love cannot glow in the breast, without the happy person knowing the same. Is it possible, in the nature of things, that the holy soul can love God without being conscious of it? What! Is the pleasing and powerful nature of love such that it may dwell in a mind, and the possessor remain ignorant of it. What! Is it so weak and feeble an affection, that it may live in a secret chamber of the heart, unperceived and unregarded. Universal feeling declares the contrary.

Peace with God also implies peace with conscience.

This faculty is the most vigorous of a virtuous nature remaining in the depraved mind. Her office is to approve of what is good, and to disapprove of what is evil. Next to Omniscience, she is the best acquainted with the human character; and next to Him the severest avenger of wrong. Conscience is a judge from whose tribunals no criminal can flee. In numerous instances the guilty may evade deserved punishment, and elude both the power and policy of his country; but none can elude the torments and reproaches of a guilty conscience. Neither darkness, nor distance, nor protection, can defend against her accusations; but conscience harasses the unhallowed soul when no eye seeth, and when no hand can relieve. Hence, in proportion to the native power of conscience, and her tormenting energy to raise tumults in the soul, so will the evidence of peace of justification become lucid and strong.

What! can the soul be delivered from such unspeakable horror and dread, and not be conscious of the astonishing change? Can the mind be relieved from the influence of such torments and accusations, and dreadful foreboding, and not know it? Nay. Ask the soul who has been in such a case, and he will declare the total impossibility of the thing. What! Is it possible that the mariner, who has been long tossed and driven on the tempestuous ocean, should not know when he arrives in safety on the shore? This would be absurd in reasoning, and impossible in fact. Hence the inference is candid and unavoidable, that peace of conscience is an undeniable instance of justification. Nor can it be denied, that the justified are partakers of the redemption purchased by the blood and merits of Jesus.

Peace with God likewise implies peace with all the creatures of God. None of the creatures of God can injure the children of God; and many of them shall be of essential benefit. It is admitted, that many are the enemies of the righteous, and that the Prince of Darkness and wicked men, are ever ready to persecute and harass; but the goodness and power of their heavenly Father, renders these of real advantage. The buffeting of Satan taught humility to Paul, and many advantages have resulted to the righteous from the persecutions and machinations, of wicked men and devils. It is likewise written concerning the righteous, that God has "made a covenant for them, with the beasts of the earth, the stones of the field, and with the fowls of the heaven, and their habitation shall be in

“ peace :” and it is also said God is their “ refuge and “ their strength.”

Nay more ; peace with God implies, that all his divine perfections are engaged to do the believer good. His wisdom to guide, his power to protect, his goodness to bless, his mercy to pardon, his love to cheer, and his grace to save. “ God is their God, and they are his “ people.” “ Happy are the people who are in such a “ case.” Blessed are they who “ know the joyful “ sound ; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy “ countenance.”

It will indeed be granted, that the justified of the Lord are not uniformly in the same agreeable possession of comfort ; but still the foundation of God standeth sure, and he resteth in his love ; and Christ “ has said, My peace I leave with you, and my peace I “ give unto you ; not as the world giveth, give I unto “ you.”

The confidence of children is another evidence of an actual participation of redemption.

It has been already proved, that adoption is one of the essential parts of salvation. The redeemed of the Lord were the eternal subjects of his distinguishing love ; and they who are so, are in due time called, and justified, and also admitted into the family of God. In this blessed adoption, a relative change is effected, and the happy one “ translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God’s dear son :” he is constituted “ an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ ; “ a fellow-citizen of the saints ; a child of God ;” and protected, educated, nourished, corrected, and in every respect dealt with as one of God’s children. Nor is it

possible, as we have formerly found in the nature of things, that such can be the case, and the mind unconscious of the fact. And it is equally obvious, that this knowledge operates along with other proofs, to ascertain the actual possession of salvation. The nature of adoption, the various ingredients of which it is composed, the things which uniformly attend it, together with the operations of the spirit of adoption, all conspire to prove this important matter.

Scripture accords with this reasoning. Hence it is written, " If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his. God hath sent forth the spirit of his son into our hearts, crying abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God, and if children, then heirs ; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." Nay more ; it has been found, that this filial assurance is the work of the divine Spirit, and certainly Omnipotence can make his own work manifest. Hence are these precious words of inspiration concerning the believing Ephesians, " After that ye believed, ye were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of the inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of his glory."

Fact also accords with scripture in the confirmation of this comfortable truth. Hence many, both in ancient and modern times, have acquired the fullest assurance of their relation to God, as his adopted children. The venerable Jacob exclaimed in his dying moments, " Lord, I have waited for thy salvation." Long he eagerly desired that of which he was now in possession. David consoled himself amidst all his domestic afflictions,

tions, saying, “ Although my house be not so with
 “ God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting cove-
 “ nant, well ordered in all things, and sure: this is all
 “ my salvation, and all my desire.” Hence we find
 him in another day rejoicing and saying, “ Surely good-
 “ ness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my
 “ life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for-
 “ ever.” With similar confidence Peter could appeal to
 Christ himself, saying, “ Lord, thou knowest all things;
 “ thou knowest that I love thee.” How explicit is the
 testimony of Paul the aged, who in the view of death
 exulted, saying, “ I know in whom I have believ-
 “ ed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep what
 “ I have committed to him against that day: henceforth
 “ there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness,
 “ which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me
 “ at that day, and not to me only, but to them also
 “ who love his appearing and glory.” In exact cor-
 respondence to this experience of the ancient saints,
 many in after age have departed this life, in the full
 assurance of faith, and winged their way to glory, sing-
 ing the loud praises of confidence, “ Unto him that
 “ hath loved them, and hath washed them from their
 “ sins, in his own blood, and hath made them kings
 “ and priests unto God, even their Father.

Here it is natural to inquire, how comes a frail im-
 perfect creature to obtain such divine exaltation? This
 question has already obtained an answer, when con-
 sidering the operations of the spirit of adoption; and it
 is here only necessary to add, that the Spirit brings the
 promises of the gospel to sweet remembrance: that he
 “ works in believers both to will and do of God’s good

“ pleasure ;” and strengthens the eye of faith more clearly to discover the things which are performed by his gracious hand. The natural consequences are, deep humility of soul, a tender conscience, an ardent love to God, a holy zeal in the good ways of the Lord, and a glorious superiority to all the riches, honours, and pleasures of the world.

Certainly then the unadopted and unjustified, can have no solid confidence. This alone is the heritage of the people of God. Delusive, unstable, and unavailing, are all the hopes of unrenewed men. “ The “ hope of the hypocrite shall perish. There is no peace, “ saith God. to the wicked. The wrath of God abideth “ upon them.”

The timid believer ought also to recollect, that fears and doubts will not encourage, but rather retard the growth of holiness. Want of faith produces doubt, and without faith it is “ impossible to please God.” Hence every child of God ought to cherish confidence, and “ come boldly to the throne of grace, that he may obtain mercy, and grace to help in every time of need.”

There is likewise a joy in the Holy Ghost, which ranks among the evidences of an actual participation of redemption.

Joy is a pleasing sensation of mind, arising from pleasure either enjoyed or expected. Spiritual joy is an holy, sweet, silent, or a strong and violent transport of soul, in consequence of having obtained pardon through the free grace and sovereign mercy of the Most High. The principal object of this joy, is a reconciled God and Father in Christ Jesus. Hence Paul introduceth be-

lievers as saying, “ We joy in God, through our Lord “ Jesus Christ.” If a man rejoices in the favour of his prince, may not the child of God rejoice in the favour of the King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords? Is it possible that the holy soul can reflect upon the numerous and important benefits, resulting from union to Christ and the enjoyment of God’s favour, and not be “ filled “ with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” Hence he is represented as singing in the righteous ways of the Lord, and admonished to rejoice evermore. “ Rejoice “ in the Lord, ye righteous, and again, I say, rejoice.” Rejoice in prosperity, in adversity, in life, in death, and through all eternity. Rejoicing will be the unceasing employment of the righteous in heaven ; therefore their heavenly Father permits them to learn to sing the songs of salvation, even when in this foreign land. Nor does the joy of the believer rest upon a sandy foundation. Nay, it is founded on the immutable nature and divine perfections of God ; upon the Rock of ages ; or upon the infinite merit and prevalent intercession of Christ, and the inviolable nature of that union which subsists between him and his people ; that “ neither death nor life, “ nor things present, nor things to come,” can either dissolve or rend in sunder.

The joy of the hypocrite comes from the earth ; but this from heaven. That delusive ; this real. That of short duration ; this everlasting. “ The hope of the “ hypocrite perisheth, “ and so also doth his joy. The joy of the hypocrite inspires pride ; but that of the believer humility. The former emboldens to sin, the latter leads to abound more and more in all the works

of righteousness, to the praise and glory of God the Father.

This reminds us, that growth in grace is another evidence of an actual participation of redemption.

It has been found, that sanctification is one of the essential blessings of the redemption of Jesus. Grace in the soul of man is a progressive work. The sowing is instantaneous, but the growing progressive. Various similitudes are employed in scripture, to denote this progressive work. It is compared to a "seed, or a grain of " wheat cast into the ground, and bringing forth in some " thirty, and in some forty, and in some fifty, and in " some an hundred fold." Again it is represented by a grain of mustard " seed cast into the earth, which be- " cometh a tree, so that the fowls of the air come and " lodge in the branches thereof." To this gradual pro- gress refers the descriptions of babes and children, and old men in Christ. Hence also are the elegant de- scriptions of the Christian life, given in the page of re- velation. " The path of the just is like the shinning " light, which shinneth more and more unto the per- " fect day. But unto you that fear my name shall " the son of righteousness arise with healing under his " wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves " of the stall. In old age, when others fade, they shall " still be fat and flourishing, to show that the Lord is " upright: he is a rock and stay to all them who trust " in him."

But in what manner does the child of God grow in grace?

He grows both internally and externally. The graces planted by the Spirit expand their roots down-

LECTURE XVIII.

The Perseverance of the Saints.

JUDE 24, 25. "Now, unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

THE external shades of the character display the internal qualities of the mind. The changing character indicates mental defect. The vigorous mind forms a proper estimate of its own powers; pursues its design with firmness; and in due time success proves the existence of internal strength. A persevering turn of mind uniformly displays mental excellency. Countless, and almost incredible have been the achievements of the persevering mind. What natural and adventitious difficulties has it surmounted! What dangers has it suffered, and what hardships has it overcome! What affluence and honour has it acquired, and what lasting and extensive benefit has it conferred upon society! Nay more; numerous facts in the history of the human mind unite to prove, that the want of perseverance in the mind; both lessens the value, and tarnishes the lustre of all the other qualities.

But whatever is amiable and praiseworthy in man, is divinely superior in God. With him is the perfection of wisdom and strength. His plans are formed with consummate wisdom, and executed with unceasing activity. Wisely formed, his schemes are always successful: nor does change enter into the unfolding of his purposes. “He is of one mind, and who can change “him.” This amiable feature of the divine character sheds a pleasing lustre over the whole of the divine government, and especially over the purposes of God “respecting the vessels of mercy.” Having “loved “them with an everlasting love,” he has resolved to keep them by his “Almighty power, through faith, un-“to salvation.” The doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints, is in its own nature important; but the present opposition made to this radical truth, renders it a subject of increasing importance.

The believer’s life on this side the grave, is one continued warfare, and he has to contend both with human and angelic foes. Hence Paul, speaking of the Christian conflict, uses these memorable words: “We “wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against prin-“cipalities and powers; against the rules of the dark-“ness of this world; against spiritual wickedness in “high places.” Each of these, in their station, labour to remove the holy soul from the elevations of celestial comfort and joy. The Prince of fallen angels “goeth “about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” The world with all its flatteries and frowns unite their destructive influence. “The fear of man, which bring-“eth a snare,” and “the favour of man, which is de-“ceitful,” both conspire to injure the happy one. But

a believer's enemies are chiefly those of his own bosom.

The malicious efforts of external foes would prove unsuccessful, if no treacherous foe lurked within. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked? Who can know it?" The native baseness of the heart is displayed by arguing in favour of sin, and by seducing the sinner to comply with criminal suggestions. Thus surrounded by powerful and crafty enemies, and secretly impelled by internal corruptions, who would not be solicitous respecting the fate of the believer? Is there not great reason to dread that he shall one day "make shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience," and, falling from his dignity, be deprived of his privileges. To prove that he cannot, is the work on which I am now to enter.

But from whence are the material of proofs to be drawn? Must we repair to the dark regions of heathen morality, or solicit the aid of fallen reason? None of these are qualified to guide the footsteps to the dwelling of truth; but lo! a beam of light darts from the revealed region, to guide to evidence strong and conclusive. Directed by this heavenly constellation, it will be found that the perfections of the Godhead,—the resolutions of eternity,—the personal works of the Three who bear record in heaven,—the declarations of scripture,—the means employed in edifying the faithful,—and the history of the saints, unite to prove the comfortable doctrine of the perseverance of the saints.

The perfection of God proves the perseverance of the saints.

The moral maxim is obvious, that whatever is correspondent to the divine perfections must be true, and the contrary false. The glory of the divine nature is displayed by the doctrine of the perseverance of the faithful; therefore it is a doctrine both according to truth and godliness. The contrary doctrine militates against the immutability of God; therefore it must be false. It has already been remarked, that a changing character indicates mental defect; and certainly it would tarnish the lustre of the divine perfections, to suppose that the purposes of God are susceptible of change. If the nature of God could change, it behoved either to change for the better or for the worse. The former militates against his infinite perfection, and the latter against his consummate wisdom. If the nature of God may change, then may his purposes; but as the one is invariable, so likewise is the other. And since the purposes of God cannot alter, his gracious purpose respecting the salvation of the chosen “shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure.” The character of God, exhibited in the sacred oracles, accords with this mode of reasoning. “God himself says, “I am the Lord; I change not: therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.” It is also written of him, “God is of one mind, and who can change him?” and he is called the “Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning.”

The perseverance of the saints likewise displays the wisdom of the divine nature.

The alteration of a purpose argues original folly; but it would be impious to ascribe such a thing to God. This, however, must be attributed to him, if he should

once resolve to save his children, and afterwards abandon them to the will of the cruel foe. Would it be consistent with infinite wisdom, to appoint means which were not adequate to accomplish his purposes? A little reflection, however, will tend to prove, that both the principal and subordinate means ordained by God for the salvation of man, were all perfectly adequate to the destined work. Has not the Son of God performed that part of the redeeming work given him of the Father to do? and is he not now able to save to the uttermost, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for his people? Who can limit the Holy One of Israel, or pretend to insinuate that his influences are insufficient both to begin and to perfect the work of grace in the hearts of the heirs of promise? After the numerous conquests obtained by the appointed means of salvation, who will question their power to perfect the work of salvation? Positive facts support infinite wisdom, and establish the final perseverance of the saints.

The power of God is also magnified by the final perseverance of the saints. The designs of mortals are frequently frustrated through a deficiency of power; but no such thing can be attributed to God. The power of God is unlimited; and since the regeneration of the soul is the work of God, he will carry forward the same unto perfection. He is represented as a wall of fire around his children; and he has said, that he will appoint salvation for walls and bulwarks; consequently none can penetrate through such a defence to injure, or finally destroy. His hand is never shortened, neither is his power lessened; and since the faithful are kept

by the power of God through faith unto salvation, they must hold on their way rejoicing.

The mercy of God is from everlasting, and his compassions fail not: therefore the favoured of the Lord shall obtain the heavenly inheritance. Certainly no favour can rise superior to that of the salvation of the soul; but it would argue a deficiency of goodness, were God first to confer salvation, and then permit to fall short of eternal felicity. There is, therefore, the strongest assurance, that he who is gracious and merciful, and "who of his abundant mercy has begotten again" his chosen, "will perfect that which concerneth them." Since he has displayed his mercy and great love towards them, in quickening them when dead in trespasses and sins, he will not certainly forsake the work of his own hands.

The justice of God also secures the perseverance of the saints. By the most infallible evidence, he has assured the churches, that he has accepted of the atonement of Jesus in the room of the faithful; and having done so, justice requires that they obtain the purchased possession. God is faithful and just; hence his chosen shall in due time come to the kingdom prepared for them before the foundation of the world. Behold then the sure foundation upon which the righteous rest for heaven and salvation! The superstructure founded upon the Rock of ages must stand. That doctrine which has for its basis divine perfection, must be infallibly certain. The perseverance of the saints centres in the divine perfections, and receives its existence and stability from hence; therefore no possible certainty can rise superior to that which confirms this doctrine.

The resolutions of the eternal Three who bear record in heaven, afford another argument to prove the stability of the faithful.

When counseling, or advising, or deliberating, are ascribed to the Godhead, these expressions do not indicate the same idea as when applied to men; for then they suggest the necessity of mutual aid and advice, and imply the existence of difficulties which can only be overcome by the combined exertions of wisdom and power. These ideas, however, cannot apply to God; therefore the phrase, the resolutions of eternity, appears better calculated to convey the intended ideas respecting what was done in eternity concerning the salvation of the elect. The simple, but majestic narrative of the execution of Jehovah's purposes, corresponds with this view. "And God said, let there be light; let there be "a firmament; let us make man; let us go down and "confound their languages." In the inexpressible era of eternity, the sacred Three formed the plan of salvation; adjusted all the parts; selected all the subjects; appointed all the means; and determined both the particular and the combined part which each of them was to perform in carrying the same into effect: nor can any one of these fail of their destined accomplishment. The resolutions of heaven chiefly respect the creation, the government, and the redemption of the world. The first of these has been completely effected; the second has been so in part; and the remaining part is still advancing with heavenly accuracy and divine power; therefore it is reasonable to conclude, that the same will take place with respect to the third. Nay, the same fact exists concerning the third as the second;

even that part has already been accomplished, and the remainder will be so in due time.

The personal works of the sacred Three likewise secure the final perseverance of the faithful.

Whilst these exert their united energy in the work of salvation, there is also a particular part appropriated to each. The Father resolved to sustain the character of Supreme Lord and Judge, and in that character to vindicate the honours of the divine law, and to glorify the divine perfections. In this character, he selected, appointed, sent, qualified, and both supported Christ under his mediatorial work, and accepted of the same in the room of the faithful. He likewise promised to Christ, that when he should make his soul an offering for sin, that he should see his seed, and that the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hand; and that he would give him the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. And that in order to accomplish these things, Jesus should be invested with all power, both in heaven and in earth, and reign until all his enemies should be subdued.

The Son resolved to perform the will of the Father, by undertaking the arduous work of man's redemption, and engaged at the time appointed, to assume human nature, to reveal the knowledge of salvation; to suffer and die an atonement for the guilty; to rise again from the dead, and to ascend up into heaven, there to carry into full effect the whole scheme of salvation. The Holy Ghost resolved to inspire, qualify, and support prophets, apostles, and ministers, in the work of salvation, to shed in an unmeasured degree the influ-

ences of his grace upon the human nature of Christ, to descend upon the apostle, and to begin and carry on the good work of grace in the hearts of the faithful, until all the children of mercy were prepared for glory.

Now, whether these works are considered unitedly or separately, they afford a full proof of the perseverance of the saints. One thing is abundantly obvious, that the design of the Godhead in all these things was the salvation of men. But if it were possible that the converted might fall away to condemnation, then all their designs and exertions might be frustrated. There is not a single idea, however, which the mind can form of the nature or perfections of the Godhead, that suggests any such thought. Certainly whatever wisdom, or power, or goodness, or love, can effect, has been done to accomplish the redemption of man. Reasoning from the inherent qualities of the divine nature, from the works already performed, from the operations which are going forward, and from the promises which are recorded, there arises the strongest assurance, that the righteous shall endure unto the end. Has not the wisdom of the Father been displayed in the choice of Christ as Mediator, and in the different means employed to render effectual the purpose of grace? Has not his power been sufficiently displayed in the creation, preservation, government, and redemption of the world, to convince the mind, that he is able to save the soul from finally wandering? Has not the wisdom, the power, the goodness, the grace, and the love of Jesus, been amply displayed in what he has done, and is doing to rescue the sons of misery from the bondage and slavery of Satan? And, after all the conquests of mercy, and the displays of power, given

by the Divine Spirit in the exertions of his love, over the depravity and perverseness of men, who can call in question either his inclination or his power to perfect the work of holiness in the minds of the children of his care? Nay, it admits of no doubt, that if evidence and certainty enter into any argument or subject, it does so in all the strength of moral demonstration, into the perseverance of the saints.

The declarations of scripture also prove the perseverance of the heirs of promise.

The sacred oracles are the only standard of doctrine, and to all who admit their divine inspiration, their decisions are undeniable evidence. This truth, however, shines with radiant splendour in almost every page of the sacred record. A few passages may be collected. The patient Job says of "the righteous, that he shall "hold on his way; and he that hath clean hands, shall "be stronger and stronger." The righteous man has acquired this honourable appellation from the righteousness of Christ being imputed to him through faith, which enables him to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in the world. To him it is promised, that through the strength of Christ, in whom he walks as the way, the truth, and the life, he shall steadily pursue his heavenly journey in opposition to inward langour, or outward temptations, or difficulties, or enemies. The hands are the emblem of action, therefore "clean hands" indicate an holy heart and upright conversation. "Out "of the heart are the issues of life," hence the purified heart induces its possessor to walk uprightly, and to work righteousness. It is likewise obvious, that this implies the existence of spiritual life and strength; and

it is here promised, that the same shall become stronger and stronger, qualifying the believer to resist temptation, to vanquish corruption, to exercise grace, to perform duty, and to persevere in the good ways of the Lord. It is farther said, that "the way of the Lord is "strength to the upright;" indicating, that strength is communicated during the progress of the journey; and so the heavenly traveller becomes stronger and stronger, and goes from strength to strength, until he appears before God in the celestial Zion. The perseverance of the saints is also clearly taught in the beautiful language of Isaiah, when he says, "God giveth power to "the saints; and to them that have no might, he increaseth strength; so that they run, and are not "weary, and walk, and are not faint." Hence, if the righteous hold on his way, and becomes stronger and stronger, it is sufficiently evident that he must persevere unto the end.

The same comfortable truth is taught in the following passage. "The path of the just is like the shining "light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect "day." How beautiful the image here employed to pourtray the sacred truth! Behold yonder sun announcing his approach in the morning dawn, at the appointed moment darting his rays to the western mountains, tinging the sky with his radiant beams, dispelling the darkness, scattering the light, diffusing joy and gladness over the whole creation, and gradually increasing in splendour and strength, until he arrives at his meridian glory! Clouds, and storms, and tempests, sometimes darken his countenance, but never retard his progress. Similar is the case with the commencement,

progress, and perfection of grace. Behold it appearing in the dawnings of reflection, repentance, and sorrow, at the appointed moment of heavenly illuminations, darting its rays, and proving its existence upon the mountains of Zion; in the sacred observance of religious ordinances, displaying its energies over the whole character and conduct; labouring to remove ignorance, and to spread knowledge; and struggling to circulate joy and gladness all around! Nay, behold this heavenly grace renewing its strength, and repeating its benevolent exertions, until it overcomes death, and in triumph enters the gates of the heavenly paradise.

The venerable King of Israel also rejoiced in the confidence of perseverance, when he said, "The Lord will "not cast off his people; neither will he forsake his inheritance." The endearing appellations of his "people, and his inheritance," strongly imply the sacred truth. It is inconsistent with the wisdom of God to suppose that he would relinquish his inheritance or people; nor can any superior power wrest them from his hand. The property and right which God has in them, secures their final salvation. There can no reason be assigned why God was induced to choose them for a people, and constitute them his inheritance; but with equal strength implies the certainty of their final happiness. He has loved, selected, called, sanctified, and redeemed his people; therefore they shall never be cast off, nor shall any one of them prove "a cast-away." Afflict he may, but forsake he cannot. He has engraven them on the palms of his hands; set them as a seal upon his arm; given them a name and place in his house, better than that of sons or daughters; and he keeps them as the apple of his eye: therefore his chil-

dren shall persevere unto the end. That the cup of consolation may swell and overflow, the Holy Ghost, by David, addresses every believer, saying, "The Lord " will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth " thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Is- " rael shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is " thy keeper; the Lord is thy shade upon thy right " hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the " moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from " all evil; he shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall " preserve thy going out, and thy coming in from this " time forth, and even for *evermore*." Is it possible that any form of language can more explicitly teach the final perseverance of the saints?

The same doctrine is taught in another of David's sacred hymns. "They that trust in the Lord shall be " as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abid- " eth for ever. As the mountains are round about Je- " rusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from " henceforth, *even for ever*." This passage is fraught with evidence strong and conclusive. Here the character of the faithful is described. "They trust in the " Lord." Their confidence is placed upon him at all times, and for every temporal and spiritual blessing. They resemble Mount Zion, "which cannot be re- " moved," being rooted and grounded in love, and standing fast in the Lord. Nor was the local situation of Mount Zion, encircled by the mountains as a strong and natural barrier, more secure than that of the people of God, who are encircled by divine perfections, as a strong and heavenly barrier. "The Lord is round a- " bout his people." He encompasses them with his

favour as with a shield, and, lest any hurt them, he keeps them night and day; and, being thus kept by his Almighty Power, through faith unto salvation, they shall finally persevere in grace, and so be eternally saved.

The sentiments of Jeremiah correspond with those of David respecting this doctrine. “And they *shall* be “my people, and I *will* be their God: and I will give “them one heart and one way, that they may fear me “for ever, for the good of them, and of their children “after them; and I will make an everlasting covenant “with them, that I will *not* turn away from them to do “them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, “that they shall not depart from me.” Since he has graciously chosen them for his people, he will certainly continue to be their God. The only conceivable cause why God should forsake them, would be the perverseness of their hearts, and the iniquity of their lives; to prevent both, God here promises to give them one heart and one way, that they may fear him for ever. The covenant which he makes with them, is likewise an everlasting covenant, well ordered in all things, and sure, of which the promises are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus, ratified and confirmed by his blood, and made sure to all the seed. It is a covenant which rests upon the everlasting purpose of Jehovah, as an immutable basis established by promises, that God, who cannot lie, made before the world began. In respect of its author, objects, and promises, this covenant is both irreversible and eternal. The divine faithfulness is likewise engaged to secure the perseverance of the saints, when God here promises, that he “will never “turn from them to do them good.” Certainly the good

that God can do for his people, can preserve them from falling; and when he assures them that this will be everlasting, no doubt can remain concerning their perseverance in the path of holiness.

The farther we proceed in our course through the sacred pages, the evidence increases in strength and splendour. Jesus himself said of his sheep, "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, who gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." Here the evidence is very explicit. What is stronger than omnipotence? But the omnipotent power of the Father and the Son are here united to preserve the sheep of Christ from finally wandering. The gifts of God are without repentance: and here it is declared, that the Father has given these as a sacred gift to his Son. Certainly then, he will not recall his gracious donation. Christ also declares, that he gives unto his sheep eternal life; and the same reason applies to his gift, because he is possessed of the same perfections. This language farther supposes, that the faithful are the peculiar property both of the Father and of the Son; hence an additional argument arises to prove the perseverance of the saints. Contemplating the nature and perfections of the Father and of the Son, who can entertain the thought for a single moment, that they will ever permit the children of their love finally to perish? Where exists the superior force that can wrest the children of their love from their almighty power?

The perseverance of the saints is clearly taught in many passages of the writings of Paul. Writing to the

Corinthian church, he says, " Christ shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom ye were called to the fellowship of his Son." The blessing here promised is establishment in Christ, which certainly implies a confirmation in the faith, love, doctrine, and profession of Christ. Hence Paul says, in another place, " He who establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the spirit in our hearts." Both the faithfulness and power of God are engaged to establish the faithful; and, to assure them that he will do so, he has condescended to give the earnest of the Spirit as the sacred pledge. Have ever the faithfulness, or power, or goodness of God, been rendered of none effect? These passages require no comment; but in the most clear and explicit manner declare, that the sanctified shall unquestionably obtain eternal salvation. " The mountains may depart, and the hills be removed, but my loving kindness shall not depart: neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, who hath mercy on thee." " Nay, saith God, I have sworn that I will not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee."

The nature of the means employed to perfect the work of holiness in the minds of the heirs of promise, secure their perseverance unto the end.

Infinite wisdom is conspicuous in all the works of God. The riches of divine wisdom are conspicuous in every part of the redemption of man. Moved by sovereign love, he selected some to obtain eternal life. To accomplish the same, he has provided proper means

for vindicating the honours of the divine law, and glorifying the divine perfections, for renewing the hearts of the happy ones, by removing the love and power of sin, and implanting a principle of holiness. To cherish and mature this principle, he has also provided adequate means, and engaged his power and goodness to render the same effectual. Nor can infinite wisdom be deficient in means to accomplish his purposes.

The dispensations of providence are the ministers of his pleasure. To elevate the heart in the good ways of the Lord, he blesses the good man with an increase of substance, children, domestic comforts, personal health, and cheerful serenity of mind. The blessing of God, which maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow, descends upon his habitation. His fame and reputation extend on every side, and, similar to a spacious river, are augmented in their course by many a tributary stream. His own works praise him in the gates, and his children arising and imitating his conduct, add to his increasing reputation for honour and for virtue. Watered in such abundance with these fertilizing streams, the principle of holiness in the soul of the pious man, "grows and increases with all the increase of God." To repress corruption, to correct wandering, to chastise backsliding, or to display the heavenly strength, and improve the various graces of the divine Spirit, the adverse dispensations of providence approach the dwelling of the good man. Similar, perhaps, to those of Job, the messengers of misfortune succeed one another. His substance is gradually decreased, or his riches take to themselves wings and flee away. Death enters in at the windows of his dwelling, and removes his children

offe after another, until his habitation is left lonely and desolate. The voice of lamentation and sorrow occupies the place of exultation and joy. Sad the diminution of domestic comforts. Pierced through with many sorrows, the mind becomes feeble and dejected, and the body sympathizing with the mind, soon experiences the acutest pain and distress. Nor is this all. Reproach, disrespect, neglect, and indifference, the usual attendants of misfortune, by and by, assail him. Still, however, the good man retains his integrity, and these only tend to the increase of holiness ; and “ the trial of his faith being much more precious than that of gold that perisheth, is found unto praise, and honour, and glory.” The afflictions of Job displayed his heavenly virtues in all their excellence and vigour.

The afflictions of humanity also lead to prayer, and to increase of holiness. The pious Jacob, in the day of domestic calamity, when his cruel brother was coming to destroy the mother with the children, fled to God in prayer; and, as a prince, had power with God, and prevailed not only so as to obtain an answer, but likewise over the long-fostered hatred of his brother. Similar is the conduct of the good man in the hour of distress : he pours out his heart before God, and by the prayer of faith obtains the most important blessings. The experience of the sons of adversity, shows how beneficial this mean is to the increase of holiness, and to the perseverance of the saints.

The preaching of the gospel, and the dispensing of the ordinances, are wonderfully adapted to carry forward the edification of the faithful. The more that the mind reflects upon the nature and effects of the

preaching of the word, the more will its divine suitability appear. Here the various truths and precepts of the word are recalled up to view. The sweet promises, kind expostulations, and warm intreaties of God, are made to attach the mind in all their charming energy. The pleasures of virtue, the beauties of holiness, the advantages of religion, and the joys of immortality, are all delineated before the mind. Around the communion table also, the Lord spreads in abundance the comforts and consolations of salvation, is known to his disciples in the breaking of bread, and frequently gives them a sight of the land that is afar off, and a gracious foretaste of the happiness awaiting in the land of glory.

The influences of the Divine Spirit are the chief means employed to secure the perseverance of the saints. Upon the ratification of a peace between contending parties, hostages are sometimes given to secure the fulfilment of the treaty. This likewise generally takes place with the conquered or subdued party. In the instance before us, the contrary obtains. Man is the subdued party, yet God condescends to give the hostages. “ After that ye believed, ye were sealed “ with the Holy Spirit of Promise, which is the earnest “ of our inheritance, until the redemption of the pur- “ chased possession, that Christ may dwell in your “ hearts by faith. If any man love me, my Father “ will love him, and we will come and make our abode “ with him. I will send the Comforter, who shall abide “ with you. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our “ spirits, that we are the children of God. The Spirit “ helpeth our infirmities, with groanings which cannot “ be uttered.” The gracious and irresistible influences

of the Spirit, are liberally bestowed upon the believer, to qualify him for the various exercises of devotion, the performance of religious duties, the resisting of temptation, the enduring of hardships, and the vanquishing of every foe. Under this sacred influence, the holy soul makes rapid advances in the heavenly journey, going on from strength to strength. Nor is it possible, that, in the enjoyment of such adequate means, he can fall short of the heavenly inheritance.

To all this accumulation of strong and undeniable evidence, it may be added, that the history of the pious in every age, proves the perseverance of the saints.

Human virtue is not perfect on this side the grave. The best of men have, in some unguarded hour, stained their character with guilt. But though a good man fall seven times, he will rise again. Adam, the first and greatest of sinners, was made to experience the sanctifying influences of the Divine Spirit, and enabled to persevere unto the end. The pious and highly honoured Noah, degraded his character by an immoderate use of the fruit of the vine; yet, by repentance and reformation, he was restored to favour, and continued firm unto the end. Abraham, the father of the faithful, was, through fear, seduced into the path of deception and falsehood; yet, by Divine Grace, the tears of repentance were made to water his venerable cheeks, and he again resumed his former station, and was taught future circumspection and caution. Is it needful to mention the penitential hymns of David, or the moral reflections of Solomon, both the productions of repentance and sorrow, in consequence of great transgressions? Peter, that bold and intrepid apostle, likewise denied

his master; but Jesus prayed for him, that his faith should not fail. In fine, the uniform history of the saints in every period, fully substantiates the fact, *that all they who are regenerated by Divine Grace, persevere unto the end, and obtain eternal life.*

LECTURE XIX.

The Resurrection of the Body.

ACTS xxvi. 15. “Having hope towards God, which they themselves also allow that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.”

IN the arrangements of Divine Wisdom, certain active principles regulate the various movements of the universe. This maxim extends its influence both to the material and moral world. The display of his own glory diffuses itself through all the works of God. In subordination to the glory of their Creator, the pleasure that they have in their happy situation, and the desire of its continuance, *once* regulated the conduct of the angelic orders. But the active principle will always correspond to the quality of the character; hence a part of that race having changed their character, the active principles were likewise changed, and malignity and revenge now regulate all their proceedings.

Certain determinate principles also regulate the various movements of the material world. The sun, the moon, the stars, the planets, the orbes, the seasons, the tides, and the various animal and vegetable productions, have their determinate laws. Nor is the human frame,

from the smallest vibration of a nerve, to the most athletic movement, destitute of regular moving laws.

The same fact obtains with respect to the human mind. In the days of innocence, love to God, and a desire to promote his glory, constituted the great springs of action. But the character is now changed, and so also are the active principles. Instead of the nobler motives of Eden, hope and fear are now the most powerful springs of human conduct. In consequence of depravity, the actions of the present must be overawed by the hopes and fears of the future ; and likewise the moral law, sanctioned by rewards and punishments. This method of governing the world, evidently implies the resurrection of the human race. In the present state, the sanctions of the law are frequently unsuccessful in deterring from vice ; and also the rewards of the law in stimulating to virtue ; therefore divine justice requires, that “ there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust, “ that so every one may receive the things done in his “ body, according to what he hath done, whether it be “ good or bad.” In discussing this article of the course, the deductions of reason, the difficulties attending the doctrine, and its reality, are the chief things which claim our attention.

The deductions of reason cannot discover the resurrection of the human body.

The activity of the human mind, and the peculiar vigour of reason, are universally experienced ; yet these powers, however vigorous, are circumscribed within certain limits. Respecting matters which fall within the range of her power, reason displays great strength ;

but, beyond her proper province, her inability is quickly felt. It is a matter of considerable importance and pleasure to inquire, how far the powers of reason can proceed in the discovery of the doctrine of the resurrection. The most accurate mode of ascertaining this, will be to examine the sentiments of those men in whom unaided reason ascended to the zenith of perfection.

Consulting history, we find that Pythagoras, the first who was dignified with the honourable name of philosopher, was so far from discovering the resurrection of the body, that he taught the transmigration of the soul. Now, it is obvious, that this principle is incompatible with the resurrection of the body ; because it supposes the number of bodies far to exceed that of souls. Nay, even that the soul of Adam and those of his family, may still be passing from one body to another, through all the intervening ages, and may continue to do so to the end of time. The idea of the resurrection, includes the raising from the grave, and the re-animating the same identical person which once lived in this world, composed of body and soul. The supposition, however, that the soul passes from one body into another, plainly indicates, that the number of bodies in the universe are more than that of souls, consequently renders the doctrine of the resurrection *impossible*.

Among all the ideas acquired by the great Plato, he appears to have had no conception of the resurrection of the body. It is universally experienced, that amidst the speculations of the philosopher, he acquires ideas by means of contiguous and proximate ideas ; it is therefore rather surprising, that this truth remained hid from Plato, who speaks so fluently of the immortality

of the soul. This circumstance fully proves, that he was ignorant of the resurrection, and that it ranked among the number of truths, which the utmost efforts of unaided reason could not discover.

Amidst the wonderful discoveries and acute speculations of Aristotle, he appears to have been totally ignorant of the resurrection of the body. He taught that the heavens and the earth were eternal, and that the different kinds of mutable creatures were only rendered immortal by the endless succession of individuals. The very essence of this doctrine clearly indicates, that he understood not, that these individuals should revive and enter into a state of endless duration. He placed the immortality of the species in a succession, and not in a resurrection.

Nor did the future speculations of philosophy become more enlightened, or more accurate, concerning this subject. The progress of science improved every other doctrine, but this still remained entombed in darkness and total obscurity. Hence we find the Epicureans and Stoicks, who encountered Paul at Athens, mocking when they so much, as heard of the resurrection of the dead. To them it seemed perfectly absurd and ridiculous, that animated dust once deprived of life should again revive. Nothing appeared more impossible, than that man should a second time be formed of the same dust. Upon the supposition of the resurrection of the body, they reckoned that man could not properly be said to *die*, but only to *sleep*, if he might so soon shake it off and rise again. Nay, these philosophers were totally unable to comprehend the resurrection of the human body.

This incredulity respecting the doctrine of the resurrection, was not confined to the heathen world. Hence we are informed, that the Sadducees, a numerous and respectable sect among the Jews, denied "that there is any resurrection, or angel, or spirit." The reasonings of Paul concerning this doctrine, in his letter to the Corinthian church, proves that some even among them denied the resurrection. From this enumeration of facts, it is evident that such difficulties attended the belief of this truth, that they overcame the whole heathen world; and some who were favoured with superior advantages. This naturally leads to investigate the seeming improbabilities attending the belief of this doctrine.

The difficulties attending the reality of the resurrection of the body, baffle the utmost efforts of unaided reason. To her it appears incredible, that when the human body has been reduced to millions of atoms, partly rarified into air, partly sublimated into fire, partly changed into water, and partly crumbled into its original dust, these various elements should render back their spoils. The difficulty increases, when the mind reflects, that by means of mingling with these elements, the parts of the human body may be driven to the four quarters of the globe, and, in the general flux of nature, become parts of other bodies. Reason, therefore, with increasing incredulity and anxiety, inquires how that substance, which has become part of a fowl or fish, or beast, or tree, or shrub, should be collected to rebuild the decayed tabernacle of man, so as to constitute the same identical body? The longer that reason

and the human powers reflect upon this subject, the improbabilities increase both in number and strength. Can death relent, or the grave make restitution? Can dust and putrefaction prove the preparatives for glory?

Reason, however, should remember, there are many things in nature which at first appear *improbable*, that, upon a more minute investigation, are found to be the reverse. The events of nature are under Divine controul, and the common order may be changed to serve some important purpose. The agency of omnipotence is thus sufficient to explain the seeming improbabilities which are connected with the resurrection of the human body.

But seeming *impossibilities* also attend the doctrine of the resurrection.

According to the most accurate chemical observations, matter is not susceptible of annihilation. By the gradual progress of nature, therefore, the identical matter of the human body passes into other bodies. During life itself, the decays of nature are hourly repaired by new matter received from food; and after death, when the body has mouldered into dust, its matter may again be animated into grass, that grass may become the food of an animal, whose flesh becomes the food of man, and thus constituting part of the human body, again enters upon a similar process. In this gradual and perpetual flux, it is obvious, that the same identical particles of matter which once composed the substance of one human body, may have now become part of another human body, and that the same thing may take place in countless instances. Nay, by this

process, it may have come to pass, that the matter which constituted the body of the first man, may have formed part of the bodies of many of his sons throughout their successive generations. The almost unanswerable question, therefore, presents itself, to which of these bodies shall the individual particles of matter be restored in the morning of the resurrection?

It is obvious, that although great difficulty attends the possibility of the resurrection of the same body, yet the human mind ought not rashly to pronounce any thing impossible, where the perfections of God are interposed. In consequence of the mental weakness of man, many things at first appear a contradiction to him, which, upon a more accurate acquaintance with their nature and properties, are found to be the contrary. There is an essential difference between a *seeming* and a *real* contradiction. There are two kinds of contradictory propositions. The one, such as is self-evident from the very terms in which the proposition is announced; the predicate declaring the total impossibility of the subject, and the subject equally of the predicate; so that nothing more is necessary, in order to perceive the inconsistency of the idea of the one corresponding with the idea of the other in the same proposition, than only to understand the meaning of the different words which form the proposition. For instance, in the following propositions, that light is darkness, or that darkness is light, or that a piece of bread is a human body. The meaning of the words being understood, the fallacy of the propositions is abundantly obvious. The other kind of contradictory propositions arise from the deductions of reason, and the

consequences resulting from some obvious and acknowledged principles of reasoning. In propositions of this kind, both the parts and the terms are numerous ; therefore, a greater effort of thought is necessary to discover the truth or fallacy of the proposition. It is equally evident, that the greater effort of mind which is required, the danger of deception becomes the greater. Of this last-mentioned nature is the proposition, that there shall be a resurrection of the human body, although the particles of which it was composed, have either been scattered over the face of the earth, or passed into other bodies. The re-animation of dust, the dispersion of the particles of that dust, and its union with other bodies, at first seem to imply a contradiction ; but when the mind, in her process of reasoning, gradually proceeds, until it includes in the work of the resurrection of the body, the omniscience, the omnipotence, and the veracity of God, the complex proposition begins to assume a different form.

The *omniscience* of God renders the resurrection of the body a possible thing.

Creation includes the idea of omniscience. The most exalted seraph, and the smallest particle of dust, owe their existence to God ; therefore he must have an accurate acquaintance of the intellectual nature of the one, and the material nature of the other. The former is capable of movements, and modifications, and exertions, which baffle the powers of human reason to discover, and so likewise is the latter. Can the most accurate and learned chemist subject to the knowledge of his senses, the different movements, and modifications, and exertions of the particles of matter, which compose any

one body, which, under his inspection, undergoes a chemical analysis? Omniscience alone is adequate to such a work. But since God originally created every particle of dust, therefore he has a perfect knowledge of each particle under every possible form; and no separation, or combination, or reduction of any one particle, can lessen his knowledge of the same. The existence and abode of the smallest atom is fully known to God; and it is obvious, that such knowledge is essentially necessary to their resurrection. The thought is sublime, and is calculated to inspire the mind with the grandest ideas of the divine perfections; but however astonishing, it is certain, that every particle of dust which has constituted any part of a human body, shall in the morning of the resurrection, be separated from the general mass, and from the matter which has composed any other material body. Infinite knowledge includes a perfect acquaintance with every created thing, whether animate or inanimate, natural or spiritual, cœlestial or terrestrial.

Omnipotence renders the doctrine of the resurrection still farther evident.

The resurrection and creation of the body both require the exertions of omnipotence. It has been displayed in the former, and it can equally in the latter. Unquestionably that power which at first produced matter out of *nothing*, can form the body anew from those very particles of which it was formerly composed. The one is not so difficult as the other. The idea of creation is rendered a possible thing to the conception of the whole intelligent universe, and consequently that of the resurrection still more possible. The original formation of

matter, and all its different alterations and forms, are subject to divine power; and so likewise is the last and perpetual form that the human body shall assume in the resurrection hour. "Is there any thing too hard for God?" Both under the old and the new dispensation, the possibility of a resurrection has been proved to the conviction of mankind, by positive facts. The raising to life the Shunamite's son; the reanimation of the man, whose bones touched the bones of the prophet; the raising from the dead, Lazarus and the widow of Nain's son; were so many facts which occurred under both dispensations, to carry the fullest conviction to mankind, that it was a possible thing with God to raise the dead.

The *veracity* of God, in conjunction with the other perfections which have been mentioned, places the certainty of the resurrection in the strongest point of view.

It has been proved, that the deductions of reason, and the investigations of philosophy, can determine nothing with certainty concerning the resurrection of the body. The subject is too sublime for the comprehension of limited powers. Revelation alone, with unerring accuracy, can determine this matter. It is obvious, that many difficulties are involved in the resurrection of the same numerical body; but the mode of removing these now becomes simple and easy, even that omniscience and omnipotence prove, that God is able to raise the dead; and his veracity approaches to assure us, that he will do so in the destined moment. Man is not qualified to judge how far the divine power can reach, or to fix a limit beyond which it cannot pass. The finite

mind cannot measure the extent of the divine power; and since some rule to guide our reasonings upon this, as well as every other subject, becomes necessary, I appeal to the general sense of mankind, if the wisest and the most dignified rule is not to refer the decision of this matter to the infallible standard of revelation. Such appears to have been the sentiments of Jesus, who, in arguing with the Sadducees concerning the doctrine of the resurrection, said unto them, " Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God."

The doctrine of the resurrection is clearly revealed in a multiplicity of passages. Amidst his severe calamities, we hear the patient Job consoling himself with the assurance of the resurrection: " I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." The pious King of Israel also said, " My flesh shall rest in hope, for thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption." And in another place he says, " He that is our God, is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death." Daniel, the man greatly beloved of the Most High, speaks of the resurrection of the human body in the most explicit terms, saying, " And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." This doctrine, similar to every other doctrine of scripture, is more amply revealed in the New Testament. In reasoning with the Sadducees, our

Lord clearly revealed this doctrine, who, among other things said, “ As touching the resurrection of the dead, “ have ye not read that which was spoken unto you “ by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the “ God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob: God is not the “ God of the dead, but of the living.” Such was the force of this argument, that it even put to silence the Sadducees. The resurrection of our Lord himself not only afforded an additional proof of the possibility of the general resurrection, but he likewise rose as the first fruits of them that slept. After his resurrection, this truth shone with meridian splendour under the ministrations of the apostles, who went everywhere preaching the doctrine of the resurrection. Paul declared his confident hope of the resurrection of the dead, as he reasoned when standing before the bar of Felix, and when arraigned before King Agrippa, saying, “ Why should it be thought a thing incredible with “ you, that God should raise the dead?”

The errors which infested the Corinthian church respecting this doctrine, gave an opportunity to place this important article of the Christian faith in the full strength of moral demonstration. “ How say some among you, that there is no resurrection of the dead; “ if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ “ not risen; and if Christ be not risen, then is our “ preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. But now “ is Christ risen from the dead; and since by man came “ death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.” Nay, not only the reality, but likewise the manner of the resurrection, is described in the energetic language

of Paul. “ Some men will say, How are the dead raised, and with what bodies do they come? God giveth a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. So also in the resurrection of the dead, it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption ; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory ; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural, it is raised a spiritual body. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality ; then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory, O death, I will be thy plagues ! O grave, I will be thy destruction !”

It is certainly unnecessary to produce any more evidence, or many other passages might be mentioned where this doctrine is taught in the most clear and convincing manner. “ Life and immortality are brought to light through the gospel.”

Let mankind properly appreciate the value of true religion, which reveals the certainty and nature of a future state, and let this solemn doctrine have its full effect upon the general conduct. Since there will be a resurrection, both of the just and unjust, let the sons of vice tremble before the Lord, and without delay hasten to the Saviour of sinners, who is exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and the remission of sins, in the full assurance that they who ask shall receive, and that they who seek shall find.

And to you who are the afflicted children of God, rejoice in the hope of the resurrection, which will bring you to your Father’s house, where the days of your mourning shall be for ever ended ; and where in

the new state of union your souls and bodies shall spend an eternity, in giving praises to him who died to redeem from the power of the grave, and to bring to endless glory. Amen.

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LECTURE XX.

The Doctrine of a Future Judgment.

REV. XX. 12. “*And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*”

THE uniform operations of God display his internal perfections. His wisdom, power, and goodness, were displayed in the formation of the universe. His benevolence and love, in the honour and happiness conferred upon Adam during the days of innocence. His clemency, compassion, and mercy, by intimating pardon upon the commencement of guilt. His care and kindness towards Noah and his family, in exempting them from the general deluge. His distinguishing love towards Abraham and his posterity, throughout a long succession of ages, by protecting him during his various wanderings among the idolatrous Canaanites, and by granting the same protection to Isaac and Jacob his immediate descendants—By providing a comfortable assylum in a foreign land, for the numerous family of Jacob when the famine prevailed, where they sojourned, and by delivering them from the tyranny of the king of that country, after his conduct changed

towards them—By conducting and feeding them through the wilderness, and by planting them in the land of promise—By conferring many temporal and spiritual favours upon them, and exercising forbearance amidst their perversness and rebellion, during the different periods of their history—But in an unequalled manner, the perfections of mercy, grace, and love, were displayed by the sending of Jesus into the world to make atonement; and also, in the salvation of thousands, by means of that success which has attended the gospel in different parts of the world, during every succeeding age.

The judgments of God likewise display the quality of his perfections. Divine justice, holiness, and truth, were manifested in expelling guilty Adam from the bowers of Paradise. The righteous displeasure of God was displayed against transgression in the destruction of the antediluvian world by the flood—By the fiery torrents which descended from heaven, and consumed the wicked inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities of the plain—By the hand of the destroying angel who slew the first-born of Egypt, and by overthrowing the flower of their nation in the midst of the Red Sea—By the extirpation of the seven nations of Canaan, and the different judgments inflicted upon the neighbouring nations; and by the many visitations sent to reclaim stubborn Israel, during the various stages of the history of that nation. These memorable exertions of God have, in every generation, manifested the inherent perfections of his nature, and taught the most important lessons to the children of men.

In this Lecture, however, the mind is invited to con-

templete not merely one class of perfections, but the combined exertion of all the perfections of God, displaying their cœlestial energy, either by conferring endless felicity, or inflicting endless punishment. To behold the final issue of the councils of eternity, the transactions of time, and the purposes of mercy. Nay, to witness the termination of the present system, the assembled universe, the Judge of all surrounded with his holy angels ; and, in the general judgment, to learn the true character and final destination of the whole human race.

In illustrating the nature of the general judgment, the Judge, the persons judged, their respective sentences, and the immediate consequences, are the different things which claim our attention.

The character and powers of the Judge.

According to legal language, the power of a judge is either inherent or delegated. Inherent power is derived from the relative situation in which the judge stands towards the judged, and which he possesses in himself by virtue of his relative dignity. The head of a family, of a tribe, of a community, and of a nation, has an inherent right to govern. But, should he either from choice or prudential motives, or from distance of place, or from any other motive, decline personally to exercise his right, and transfer it to another to exercise it for him, then, in that case, the power of the judge is denominated *delegated* power.

The power of the universal Judge is of the former kind. God is the universal Parent and Lord over all ; therefore he has an unquestionable right to govern and judge. He has created, and preserves all creatures ;

therefore he has a legal right to judge all. When the sacred oracles ascribe the judgment of the world to God the Father, his inherent right as the Lord of universal nature is recognized. This we find to be the fact in several passages of scripture. The venerable Abraham, interceding in behalf of the devoted inhabitants of the Plain, said, " Shall not the Judge of all the earth do " right." The King of Israel also said, " Our God " shall come, and shall call to the heavens from above, " and to the earth, that he may judge his people, and " the heavens shall declare his righteousness, for God is " Judge himself;" and in another place he says, " The " Lord cometh to judge the earth; he shall judge the " world with righteousness, and the people with his " truth." Here both the person and the qualifications of the Judge are distinctly mentioned. Paul also speaking of this subject, says, that " the judgment of God is " according to truth," and that " God shall judge the " secrets of men by Jesus Christ."

In scripture, however, this dignified work is sometimes ascribed unto the Son, as well as unto the Father. The question, therefore, presents itself, Whether is the power by which Christ is to judge the world *inherent* or *delegated*? It is both inherent and delegated. No moral truth is more obviously certain, than that creation confers a valid right to govern. It was formerly proved, that Jesus is the Creator of all, therefore he is the universal Lord, and in this relative station his right to judge is inherent. The preservation of the world also includes the same right, and this likewise we have proved to be the work of Christ; by consequence, his legal and inherent right is fully substantiated. " In the be-

“ ginning was the word; all things were made by him; “ and without him was not any thing made that was “ made. He is before all things, and by him all things “ consist; and he upholdeth all things by the word of “ his power.” It follows as an unavoidable conse-
quence, that he has an inherent right to decide the final lot of every intelligent creature.

But besides the inherent power which Jesus possesses as the true and living God, he likewise enjoys a dele-
gated power in the character of Mediator. As an evi-
dence of his fidelity, and as the reward of his mediatori-
al sufferings, Jesus has this power given him of the
Father. Hence, said he unto his disciples, immediately
after his resurrection, “ All power is *given* unto me,
“ both in heaven and in earth.” He himself also said,
even before his sufferings, “ The Father judgeth no
“ man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son,
“ that all men may honour the Son, even as they hon-
“ our the Father.” The same truth is taught by Paul,
where he says, “ Jesus humbled himself, and became
“ obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.
“ Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and
“ given him a name, which is above every name, that
“ at the name of Jesus every knee should bow; of things
“ in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the
“ earth; and that every tongue should confess, that Je-
“ sus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”
And in another place he says, “ We must all appear
“ before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one
“ may receive according to the deeds done in the body,
“ whether they be good or bad.” In this sense, there-
fore, it appears sufficiently evident, that Jesus possesses

as delegated as well as an inherent right to judge the world.

It is likewise necessary, in the character of a judge, that he be properly qualified to perform the duties of his office. But what are the qualifications absolutely necessary in the Judge of all the earth? A perfect knowledge of all characters, a just discernment of the merit, or demerit of every action, and power to enforce his own sentences, are among the number. The perfection of Christ's knowledge is fully substantiated in Scripture. It was formerly found that he created all, therefore he must be perfectly acquainted with their character. The most secret recesses of the human heart are all before him. Neither deceit, nor cunning, nor art, nor any species of deception, can impose upon him whom the Father has appointed the Judge of the world.

During his abode on earth, Jesus gave full evidence of the perfection of his knowledge. The human heart is deceitful above all things, and known only to God; but, on many occasions, he manifested his perfect acquaintance with its inmost recesses. Of Him it is written, "He needeth not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man." And again, "Jesus knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Why reason ye thus in your hearts?" On a certain day, Peter made a solemn appeal to Christ himself respecting his knowledge, saying, "Lord, thou knowest all things: thou knowest that I love thee." It is abundantly obvious, that if Peter had not expressed himself accurately on that occasion, our Lord would certainly have corrected his mistake; but, as he did not, it affords

an evidence, even from Jesus himself, concerning his all-perfect knowledge.

The limited knowledge of earthly judges, renders it necessary that facts should be substantiated by external evidence. But unless his own perfect knowledge should afford evidence, how could the Judge of all the earth obtain witnesses to prove the facts which form the foundation of his sentence? Can it be supposed that wicked men would witness against each other; or, even supposing they should, how could their evidence be deemed sufficiently valid? Would it not, in numerous instances, occur, that wicked men, in giving evidence against others, would afford sufficient evidence to condemn themselves? But even although they should give accurate evidence respecting external actions, it is perfectly impossible that they could reveal the thoughts of the heart. The judgment of Christ, however, extends even to these; for the secrets of men's hearts are likewise to be judged in that eventful day. It is sufficiently evident then, that no man, whether good or bad, is qualified to emit a proper testimony in the general judgment, and the Judge of all the earth cannot proceed upon any evidence, but that which is completely legal. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do "right?"

It is also a legal maxim, that the true quality of every action must be ascertained from the internal motive from whence it has proceeded. But, "what man "knoweth the mind of man, save the spirit of a man "who is in him?" Nay, there are many motives which operate upon the human mind, which it does not fully perceive in all their extent and force. The true mo-

tives of the heart are known only to him “ who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins of the children of men.” Omnipotence is, therefore, a qualification necessary in him who is the universal Judge ; this we have formerly proved to belong to Jesus ; therefore he is qualified to judge the nations.

It is also necessary, that he who is to decide the final lot of men, should have the spirit of discernment, in order to ascertain the true merit or demerit of every action. This qualification includes both his perfect knowledge, and also his consummate acquaintance with the principles of justice and equity. Nay, not only his accurate knowledge of the principles of equity, but the rectitude of his dispositions inclining him to act correspondent to positive justice. That Jesus is qualified in all these respects, is abundantly evident from the perfections of the Godhead, which are declared to dwell in him. The perfection of justice shone forth in all his actions while on earth ; therefore he was called “ the Holy One and the Just. He loved righteousness, and hated iniquity.”

In addition to all these qualifications, a judge must be invested with authority, to enforce his own decisions. This is essentially necessary in every judge, and also in the Judge of all the earth. Who would appear before the tribunal, or regard the sentence of that judge who was not invested with full power to give effect to his own decrees ? Nay, without this, the designs of all government and order, would be totally frustrated. It has however, been proved, that Jesus is possessed both of inherent and delegated power. His nature is omnipotent, therefore nothing is too hard for him. “ He doeth ac-

“ according to his will in the armies of heaven, and “ among the inhabitants of the earth.” He has created all things, and he supported all things; therefore he is invested with power to enforce his own decisions. There is no adverse power that can resist omnipotence. Jesus is not only possessed of omnipotence, as the true and living God, but he was likewise, as Mediator, invested with all power, both in heaven and in earth, being the Governor and Head of the Church; consequently his power to render effectual his own judgement is sufficiently evident. Certainly he who gave being to universal nature, by whom all things consist, and who has all power given him both in heaven and in earth, is fully qualified to execute the sentences which his infinite knowledge and perfect discernment shall pronounce; nor can any fly from his presence. A criminal may, by flight, evade the vengeance of an earthly prince, but none can conceal himself from the omniscient and omnipotent Jesus. There is no darkness or shadow of death which can hide from his view. Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering. To him the darkness and the light are both alike. Neither is there any part of universal nature where his power cannot reach.

Jesus is likewise the Lord of angels, and they are represented in Scripture as employed in the general judgement. In various instances, their power to execute the will of Jesus is celebrated. One of the powerful spirits was sent forth to destroy all the first born in the land of Egypt in one night. The angels were employed in rescuing Lot, and destroying Sodom and Gomorah. One of them slew four thousand in the camp of the As-

syrians. Hence it is obvious, that these spirits who excell in strength, are qualified to execute the purposes of the Most High, whether of a merciful or destructive nature. Accordingly we find, that it is written concerning them, that in the last day he shall send " forth " his angels, and shall gather out of his kingdom all " things which offend, and them who do iniquity."

But in what manner will the Judge descend? In a visible, glorious, and majestic manner. In Scripture, the strongest figures and boldest metaphors are employed to describe his solemn descent. " Enoch, the " seventh from Adam, prophesied of these things, say- " ing, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of " his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to con- " vince all that are ungodly among them, of all their " ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed; " and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners " have spoken against him." Here both the visible descent, and the universality of the judgment are specified. In majestic and flowing language, David celebrates the descending Judge: " Our God shall come, " and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before " him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about " him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and " to the earth, that he may judge his people. And the " heavens shall declare his righteousness, for God is " Judge himself." Behold the flaming fire, the roaring tempest, and the sounding trumpet, all uniting to proclaim the visible, majestic, and solemn descent of the Judge. In another passage, David thus describes the coming of the Judge: " Let the heaven rejoice, and " let the earth be glad, let the ~~seas~~ roar, and the ful-

“ness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is
 “therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice
 “before the Lord: for he cometh to judge the earth:
 “he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the
 “people with his truth.” To comment on these words,
 would only darken their meaning, and enervate their
 force.

The evangelist Mathew informs us, “that they shall
 “see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven
 “with power and great glory, and he shall send his
 “angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall
 “gather his elect from the four winds.” Behold him
 invested with almighty power, shining in transcendent
 glory, and attended by countless angels, descending to
 judge the nations. In the twenty-fifth chapter of that
 book it is written, that “the Son of Man shall come in
 “his glory, and all the holy angels with him; then
 “shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.” This
 throne the apostle John calls a great white throne, that
 shall be erected in the air, where Jesus, in royal and
 heavenly majesty, shall decide the fate of all the kings,
 and princes, and mighty ones of the earth. Writing
 to the Thessalonian Church, Pauls says, “The Lord him-
 “self shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the
 “voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God,
 “and the dead in Christ shall rise first.” John, in the
 book of Revelation, says, “Behold he cometh with
 “clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also
 “who pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall
 “wail because of him; and the judgment was set, and
 “the books were opened, and the dead were judged
 “out of these books, according to the things written

“ in the books ; and before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.” Certainly these Scripture expressions, in the fullest manner, teach the visible, glorious, and majestic descent of the Son of Man to judgment.

But who are the persons that shall be judged ? The Scriptures inform us, that they are all the human family, and all the fallen angels. Young and old, rich and poor, righteous and wicked ; “ all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive according to the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or bad.” There the infant and the venerable sage shall appear. There the aged man shall be judged according to all his advantages, actions, and motives, which have composed his character in that station, where indulgent providence had so long continued him. The infant of a day, who has the merit of Jesus graciously imputed unto him, shall stand complete in him, whilst the sinner who is an hundred years old, and hath lived and died in sin, shall be accursed. Then the prince and the subject shall stand upon a level, and each be judged according to his conduct : the one for his ruling, the other for his subjection : the one for the improvement of his elevated, and the other for the improvement of his humble station. Then the magistrate and the citizen shall stand together. The one shall answer for his distribution of justice, and the protection and encouragement given to true religion, the other for his industrious, and peaceable and virtuous deportment. Then the minister and the people shall both be judged. Then

shall they be witnesses either for or against each other. If the minister has been indolent, erroneous, immoral, or unfaithful, the people will witness against him, and charge their condemnation to his account, and not only say Amen to his condemnation, but also prove his tormentors and upbraiders amidst eternal flames. What an awful! What a tremendous thought! Ought not this solemn consideration to be engraven upon the heart of every one who looks forward to the sacred office of the ministry, or who is engaged in this important work? Then also the faithful minister shall witness against the ungodly people, who have lived and died under the gospel, and yet remained impenitent. Then all the prayers and tears, and entreaties and admonitions, and warnings and sermons of their minister, shall rise up in judgment to condemn. Then also all their threatenings and reproaches shall return upon their own heads. Then the Lord will avenge the cause of his own ministers. Then it shall be known, that he who toucheth the servant, toucheth the master; and that he who despiseth the servant, despiseth the master. Ought not the persecutors, reproachers, and despisers of gospel ministers, seriously to consider these things?

Before this awful tribunal also shall appear the parent and the child: And where think you will the ungodly parent appear? That ignorant and vicious parent, who has reared his children in ignorance and vice; that parent who, instead of removing the natural ignorance, or repressing the natural corruption, has, by example and neglect, fostered both. Where then shall the parent, who was a drunkard, a swearer, or a sabbath breaker appear? How will his children whom he has

reared in vice upbraid him, and call for vengeance to descend upon his guilty head? What a sad reflection! But godly parents will there meet their ungodly children, and rise up in judgment against them. Then all their parental admonitions and instructions, and prayers, and tears, and warnings, will prove as so many witnesses to accuse, torment and agonize.

Before that august tribunal the two companions shall meet, who have together run the giddy round of dissipation and folly; and if they have continued impenitent, they shall upbraid and chide each other through the rolling ages of eternity. But if Divine mercy hath saved the one, and left the other to fill up the measure of iniquity, that one will witness against the other, by all the warnings and intreaties which were given.

Solemn indeed will be the transactions of that day. Then the heathens and the Christians shall assemble before the dread tribunal, and the former shall witness against the latter for their ungodly conduct, in the enjoyment of blessings which were never conferred on them. "Verily, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment, than for those cities in which most of Christ's mighty works were wrought." Verily, the heathens shall rise up in judgment to the condemnation of them who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and condemn them for the cruel slavery and hard bondage exercised over their bodies, and the gross ignorance in which they have retained their minds. Then also many nations shall severely chide the Christians for not coming over to their aid,

by using the means in their power to send the gospel to them. How will the judging Lamb frown upon them? Then nations shall witness against nations, and kingdoms against kingdoms. Fertile and awful indeed will be the events of that day.

In one sentence, then every one "shall receive according to the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or bad."

But what will be the respective sentences? Nor is the Scripture silent even upon this subject. "Then shall the king say unto them on his left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Lo, every word of this sentence is fraught with woe. What is it to be cursed of God? Banished eternally from him. To be an associate of the devil and his angels, in that fire prepared before the foundation of the world. Say, O sinner, if thou canst tell what is implied in these words? But, if thou canst not tell, neither canst thou tell what is implied in the awful torments of that lower region.

Then also the Son of Man will say unto those who are on his right hand, "Come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Blessedness from God, residence with him, and an enjoyment of all the countless stores which are reserved in heaven, enter into that happiness which remains for the people of God. Wherefore, let them comfort one another with these things, and edify one another even as they do. But some may say, Where is the certainty of the day of judgment? Where is the evidence that proves that such a day will actually arrive? "Where is the promise of his coming,

“ for since the Fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the foundation of the world?” To this I answer, that the certainty of his coming is contained in the present mode of God’s government, in the testimony of conscience, and in the record of truth.

First, in the present mode of God’s governing the world. That God is a being of infinite wisdom, justice, holiness and truth, has been fully proved. Now, since God is holy, he must hate sin, and therefore he must be disposed to punish in consequence of transgression. Since then he is disposed to punish for sin, it must either be actually done, or it would imply a deficiency of power in God to perform his pleasure. But God is also infinite in power; therefore sin must be punished. Constant and universal observation has always proved, that sin frequently remains unpunished in this world; therefore the conclusion is obvious, that it must be punished in the next. This is only a part of God’s great plan, and a coming scene will unfold the whole, and vindicate the ways of God to man. The same thing may be argued from the consideration of his infinite truth. He hath said it shall be ill with the wicked; and since it is often well with them here, it must be ill with them hereafter; since their sin does not now meet its just reward, it shall at a future period; “ for the righteous Lord loveth righteousness, and he will do that which is altogether just and right.”

Conscience, also, the internal monitor, proclaims the certain approach of judgment. Conscience, the heavenly agent, who resides in every mind to superintend the interests of morality. Now her remonstrances are frequently treated with contempt. Now her warnings

are often disregarded, and her admonitions of none effect. Thus maltreated, slighted and contemned, conscience calls upon the Judge to come to defend her injured rights, and to pour deserved vengeance on the guilty. Nor will heaven neglect to hear the cry of conscience. No! though disregarded by wicked men, conscience will be respected by God, and he will arise and vindicate her delegated authority. Nay, even conscience sometimes is endued with power to assert her own rights even in this world; and awaking against the sinner, she shall drag him before the time to the tribunal of the Great Judge, there to hear the coming sentence pronounced upon him. Dreadful beyond description are the forebodings of a guilty and an awakened conscience.

But a greater than conscience is here. The word of God, in language explicit and strong, reveals the certainty of future judgment. Supplicating for the devoted inhabitants of Sodom and Gommorah, the venerable Abraham said, "Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right? It is also written, God has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he has ordained. We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. It is appointed unto all men once to die, but after death the judgment." In these and a variety of other passages of Scripture, the positive certainty of a coming judgment is fully revealed. Hence, to all those who believe the Scriptures, and the power of God, the certainty of a future judgment is sufficiently evident.

The immediate consequences of the judgment next claim our attention.

The true nature of every transaction must be ascertained from its effects. In this view the doctrine of a future judgment is of the highest importance. To the consequences of this day, all the purposes and promises, and ordinances of God, had an immediate respect. This day brings forth the harvest of all the divine labours. It is unnecessary to enter minutely into the illustration of this part of the subject, as it will occur in the following lectures ; I shall only at present mention, that the effects and consequences are instantaneous. During the former operations of God, a long space of time frequently intervened between his purposes and their accomplishment ; and likewise between his threatenings and their execution ; but such will not be the case in the final judgment.

Scripture informs us, that when the angels shall have placed the righteous on the right hand, and the wicked on the left, that immediately he will address the righteous, saying, " Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Then they shall immediately enter upon the happiness of heaven, and their endless comfort shall commence. Then they shall be caught up in the air to meet the Lord, and sit on thrones to judge the wicked.

The sacred oracles likewise inform us, that then the judge will address the wicked on his left hand, saying, " Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." No sooner shall this sentence be pronounced, than the wicked shall be

driven from his presence, and consigned to the endless abodes of woes, " where their worm dieth not, and " where the fire is not quenched." Then both rebellious angels and men shall receive the due reward of their deeds, and both in body and soul experience the severest torments, and pains, and agonies.

With what solemn reverence should the sons of men listen to this doctrine. Assured that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night; therefore, let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober, active in the discharge of every duty, sober in the enjoyment of every favour, and giving all diligence to make our calling and our election sure. In patience possess your souls, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace which shall be brought unto you, at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Moderate thy attachment, O believer, to the things of this world, and set thine affections on things above, where Christ sitteth at the Father's right hand. Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and shall not tarry. Time is ever on the wing, and hastens to bring forward the decisive day. Happy those who shall be found watching, and prepared to enter into the marriage supper of the Lamb; but unspeakably miserable will be the situation of those who are found impenitent and unprepared.

LECTURE XXI.

On the Misery of the Finally Impenitent.

MAT. xxv. 46. “ *And these shall go away into everlasting punishment.* ”

THE contemplation of fallen glory fills the mind with painful sensations. To behold a prince clothed in rags, or seated on a dunghill! To behold one who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day, now wearing the visible signatures of poverty, and groaning under a reverse of fortune, naturally awakens the finer sensibilities of the human heart!

But the contemplation of intellectual degradation is peculiarly afflictive. The original dignity of guilty angels forms a mournful contrast to their present wretchedness; and the former honour of man to his present disgrace: the intellectual glories of his soul, to its present depraved dispositions. The profoundest reverence, the purest love, and the strongest attachment, once regulated the movements of the soul, and she spontaneously soared to heaven, and delighted herself in contemplating the fountain of excellence; but the human heart now presents a very different scene. There depraved passions, sinister motives, and vile affections, flourish in all their luxuriance and strength.

“ How is the mighty fallen ! How is the gold become
“ dim, and the most fine gold changed ! ”

Among the numerous proofs of human depravity, the means which infinite wisdom has found necessary to repress its effusions, is none of the least. The stern influence of punishment, fear and terror, must now be employed. In the history of man, we find it verified, that punishment must follow threatening, and one succeed another in every age, in order to check the effusions of depravity ; and the partial success of these means has suddenly been overcome, and the sons of men have again hastened to the path of vice. The patience of heaven, however, will not always strive with man. There is a boundary even to divine forbearance. The threatenings of God have in every generation been verified ; and so likewise shall his threatening respecting the destruction of the finally impenitent. Long his hand has been suspended over their guilty heads, but descend it must. Divine veracity must give effect to his own threatenings. The delay of punishment, instead of diminishing its certainty, only renders it ten-fold more severe. In the days of inspiration, some men of corrupt manners, fortified themselves amidst their criminality, saying, “ Where is the promise of his coming, for since the Fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the world ? ” and in our own time, some of similar sentiments and manners have arisen, both denying the existence, and endeavouring to enervate the force of eternal punishments. That our minds, however, may be established in the belief of this solemn truth, let us proceed to collect the evidence by which it stands confirmed.

A brief review of the history of this controversy will tend to elucidate its nature.

The criminality or the human heart strongly dreads the reality of this doctrine ; therefore its opposers have been numerous and formidable. It would be absurd to contend with those who teach, that the souls both of the righteous and of the wicked shall be reduced to particles of matter. The history of the church informs us, that those who deny the eternity of punishment arrange themselves into two classes. The one contends, that the termination of punishment will be effected by annihilation, and the other by restitution.

In the infancy of Christianity, the Gnostics adopted and propagated the former opinion. According to their system, the soul was mortal, except in those who through faith obtained salvation. This error originated from another still more dangerous. For, among many other erroneous opinions adopted by that sect, they taught, that there exists a threefold genus of men, distinguished into pneumatical, physical, and material. The two first they admitted were endued with good souls, and the third with an evil one. The souls of the first class they said are perfected, and may commit crimes with impunity. The second class, they added, might either merit salvation by good works, or, entangled in the mass of matter, be annihilated ; and the third class they asserted was destined to destruction. The venerable Tertullian, in his work against Valentinus, with peculiar fertility of genius and strength of argument, refuted both these erroneous opinions.

The Stoic sect, or the followers of Chrysippus, likewise erred concerning this article of the Christian faith.

The sentiment entertained by them, was, that the soul is dissolved with the body. Some, however, of the philosophers of that period were of opinion, that the soul remained alive until the general conflagration, and then perished in the universal wreck.

The annihilation of wicked souls was also maintained by some of the modern Jews; and in the Christian church, so early as the third century, one Arnobius arose, asserting, that “cruel death seems able to extinguish and reduce souls to nothing, and that they “vanish by a perpetual reduction and perishing.”

In some measure, and to a certain degree, the Socinians have adopted the same sentiment; and even the acute Locke argues, that “the death which God threatened “ed upon man only included the loss of life, with a total loss of sensation.” Dodwell represents this sentiment in a very singular form, by asserting, that “souls are “possessed of a natural mortality, but at the same rendered immortal, by the laying on of the hands of the “Bishop.”

It has been formerly mentioned, that a second class of adversaries assert, that coming punishment will receive a termination, by means of the unhappy victims being restored to comfort and to eternal felicity.

The Pythagorean doctrine concerning the transmigration of souls, seems to favour the idea of restitution. Origen maintained a singular sentiment concerning this doctrine, who says, “That the sinner may ascend “from the greatest evil to the greatest good; and therefore, since souls are immortal, I am of opinion (adds he) that it is possible, that during many periods of “time, and through immense and different ages, know-

“ing no end, they may descend from the greatest good “ to the greatest evil.” This inconsistent opinion, and the other erroneous sentiments concerning this matter, were fully refuted by the different Fathers of the Church, in the respective periods in which they made their appearance. “ God hath never left himself without “ a witness.” Tertullian, Justin, Martyr, Clemens, Romanus, Tatian and Irenæus, may be mentioned among the number of those who in ancient times as no
“ tended for the faith once delivered to the saints.”

During the course of the third and fourth centuries a numerous band of Christian heroes flourished, and the Church was confirmed in the belief of the eternity of hell torments.

Church history also informs us, that no sooner had the Church separated from popery, than she professed her faith concerning this article, saying, “ Christ shall “ appear in the end of the world to judgment, and shall “ raise the dead, and give eternal life and perpetual joy “ unto good men; but he shall condemn devils and “ wicked men, so that they may be punished without “ end.” That same Church farther added, “ We con- “ demn the sentiments of the followers of Origen, who “ assert, that there will be a termination of punishment “ to devils and damned spirits.” The Jewish Rabbies, and many of the heathen poets, also united with the venerable Fathers of the Church, in maintaining the endless duration of the torments of hell.

Among the moderns, the great Tillotson appears to have favoured the doctrine of restitution, and in defence of this sentiment he argues, that “ although God has “ threatened punishment in his word, yet he may de-

“ part from his right, and not execute his threatenings ; “ and, in order to illustrate his argument, he produces “ the instance of his conduct towards the penitent in- “ habitants of Nineveh.” The same opinion was adopt- ed by Henry More, and some other English divines. And it is matter of deep regret, that the erroneous sen- timents concerning the endless duration of coming pu- nishment have become too prevalent. The general pro- fligacy of manners induces the sons of vice strongly to desire that such might be the case, and the human mind is too easily persuaded to believe for truth what it ear- nestly wishes were so.

The sentiments of unprejudiced reason may next be examined concerning this important matter.

What are the deductions of reason respecting the doc- trine of endless torments ? To place this part of the general evidence in a clearer point of view, it may be proper to remind the reader, that logicians have adopted two principal modes of reasoning. The former is to argue from the cause to the effect. For example, “ God is infinitely wise ; therefore wisdom and design “ are conspicuous in all his works.” The latter is to argue from the effect to the cause. For example, “ Numerous creatures and things do actually exist ; “ therefore they must have been formed by some un- “ created first cause.” Now, I readily grant, that, by the first of these modes of reasoning, the unaided powers of the mind can discover nothing, with any degree of accuracy, respecting the nature of endless sorrows ; but the necessary consequences of transgres- sion, evidently lead to the conclusion, that the pu- nishment of sin shall know no end. Or, to express the

sentiment in other words, the doctrine of the punishment of the wicked is perfectly reconcileable to the perfections of the Divine nature.

The truth of this proposition I shall now endeavour to demonstrate. It will readily be admitted, that there is a sanction annexed to the divine law, correspondent to its own nature, and also that this sanction includes both rewards and punishments. It follows, that if this sanction includes in its very nature and essence both rewards and punishments, the latter must be of the same extent with the former. Since they both constitute one sanction, what solid reason can be assigned why the duration of the one part may not equal in every respect the other? And since the endless duration of rewards is not called in question, why should that of punishments? It is abundantly evident, that if he who is enabled to walk according to the Divine law, may legally expect eternal rewards; by the same argument, he who does not walk correspondent to that law, may with equal justice expect eternal punishments. The force of this argument is perfectly irresistible; and no argument of equal force can be produced in support of the contrary sentiment.

Farther, if impenitence does not merit eternal punishment, upon the same principle that holiness merits eternal rewards, that *inequality* must originate either from the nature of God, or from the quality of the free actions of wicked men and fallen angels. It is obvious, that if this inequality proceeded from God, the eternal duration of punishment would be found hostile to some one of his perfections. Hence the question would occur, Whether was eternal punishment hostile to a moral

or a natural perfection? If it should be answered, to a natural perfection; then the unavoidable conclusion would follow, that the great Legislator had not equal power to punish and to reward. The idea is absurd; for who can limit omnipotence? If it should be declared hostile to a moral perfection, then it behoved of consequence to be contrary to his relative holiness, since it is perfectly impossible that it can be contrary to his essential holiness. The relative holiness of God, however, includes both his justice and benignity. But if Divine justice was hostile to eternal punishments, then it would follow that *evil actions* merited in a less degree eternal punishments than *good actions* merited eternal rewards. How absurd the very thought! What! Are not the virtue and vice of the creature equally unqualified to affect the immutable happiness of God? Neither the one nor the other can alter or change any one of his perfections. Immutability and self-existence are equally dignified and superior, both to the virtue and to the vice either of an angel or of a man. Hence it is impossible, that virtuous actions are possessed of any intrinsical excellence, which can entitle them to eternal rewards, any more than vicious actions are possessed of an intrinsical turpitude, which can entitle them to eternal punishments. What! Shall the thought be indulged for a single moment? Or is it lawful to utter the sentiment, that *God has naturally and essentially a greater love to holiness, than he has of hatred towards sin?* Impossible! Nay let the very thought be held in the greatest abhorrence. Why then should any man endued with the common powers of understanding, adopt the sentiment that God will reward eternally, but not punish eternally?

But it may be farther asked, Can this inequality between rewards and punishments, under the moral government of God, proceed from the free actions of men? The following considerations render it abundantly evident that it cannot. Virtue is the chief perfection of man; therefore those virtuous actions which immediately relate to good men themselves, include in their very nature a certain proportion of rewards. Or, in more appropriate language, holiness constitutes the happiness of the good man. This holiness however includes the principle from whence it flows; the means by which it is preserved and strengthened; and also the whole active duties of an holy life. The natural consequence is obvious, that it amounts to an infinite loss to deprive the rational creature of this perfection, and that comfort. And an infinite loss and eternal punishment are only different modes of expression, employed to denote the same thought.

Nor can any equality between rewards and punishments be traced by the efforts of reason, as it respects the creatures of God.

The state in which the angels now are, admits not of change; therefore it cannot be affected either by good or bad example. The seductions, temptations, and snares of evil angels, are too successful in enticing men to sin, but the conduct of men cannot affect their situation. Nor does it appear that the condition of good angels can be influenced so as to lay a foundation for any inequality. And, with respect to those creatures of God whose condition is capable of change, they are equally corrupted by bad, as they are improved by good example. Nay they are more influenced by the former than

by the latter; therefore, if any inequality did exist, it would rather argue in favour of punishments than rewards. The inference from this mode of arguing is obvious, even that reason herself determines a perfect equality between the merit and demerit of actions, by consequence that rewards and punishments are dispensed with equal proportion. Nor at least can any reason be assigned why punishments should not be of the same duration with rewards until the voice of revelation is heard upon this question.

Farther, reason can discover no path by which punishment may terminate. Annihilation, or restitution, are the only possible modes which can be discovered. The keenest and the most substantial efforts of reason, can discover no arguments to support the doctrine of annihilation. Upon inquiry, it will be found, that as far as observation and philosophy have extended their researches, no annihilation happens in the natural, and why in the moral kingdom of God? Certainly the one exists, and is governed for more excellent and noble purposes than the other. Reason, with increasing solicitude, inquires, Why should God destroy the work of his own hands? Why has he impressed his moral image upon the human mind? Why has he engraven with such a durable impression the desire of immortality? Why would infinite wisdom and goodness have done so, unless it was intended to confer immortality? Nor can any reason be assigned why that immortality should not exactly correspond to the present conduct of man, and to the moral government of God. Would it be consistent either with unerring equity or truth, to conceal the future consequences of transgression. Nor

would infinite benevolence conceal any motive which appears so strongly calculated to enforce repentance and reformation, as that of endless punishment for transgression. In fine, the whole of the Divine perfections appear hostile to the idea of annihilation.

And if reason cannot discover any arguments sufficient to support annihilation, much less to support *restitution*. Repentance and reformation are produced in the present state of being, by the blessing of heaven, upon certain appointed means. These means, so far as reason can discover, appear to be confined to the present state of existence. Nay, supposing it were granted that these same means were continued beyond the grave, what reason can be discovered why they should be successful *then*, when they have been unsuccessful *now*? The circumstances of sinners will then certainly be much more unfavourable; besides, their hearts will then be more hardened in depravity, and all their vicious habits perfectly confirmed. It may farther be added, that the contempt and neglect of the means of salvation *here*, afford a strong presumption, that they will be denied *hereafter*. It naturally follows, that reason, so strongly fortified with these arguments and rational deductions, easily yields to the superior force of revelation.

But this argument may be placed in another light. Positive equity requires God to sanction his law with eternal punishment. This maxim corresponds both with the eternal nature of God, and the immortal nature of man. The nature and dominion of God are everlasting; therefore he dispenseth eternal rewards and punishments. The human mind is not only im-

mortal and capable of eternal punishments, but the impenitent are eternally sinning, by consequence they are eternally meriting punishment. Most of the objections against the duration of punishment proceed upon the mistaken idea, that the sons of impenitence cease to sin in yonder land of woe. But the nature of depravity, and the state in which they leave this world, proves quite the reverse.

Again, arguing from the effect to the cause, it is sufficiently evident, that the mercy of God manifested towards the righteous, implies that he has equal right to punish. These perfections which authorise him to show mercy, authorise him to inflict punishment. The unlimited power of God is admitted on both sides of the argument. Can then any sinner deprive the righteous of salvation purchased by the merits of Christ? Can any mortal prevent God from expressing his displeasure against the violation of his own law, in that way which infinite wisdom declares consistent with the glory of the Divine perfections? Certainly none. What mode of procedure then against the impenitent can more terribly display Divine Majesty, than to punish eternally the contempt of the Divine law? What can display the immaculate holiness of God in a more illustrious manner than to exclude the sinner eternally from his presence? Nay, the very benevolence of God towards the good, is displayed by means of his punishment of the bad. It follows as an unavoidable consequence, that they who deny the eternity of hell torments, sully the glory of all the divine perfections.

Finally, there are many salutary consequences resulting from the just punishment of transgression,

The consequences of this doctrine extend to all the branches of morality. It moves the righteous with holy fear, and restrains the perverseness of the wicked. It inspires the minds of the redeemed with gratitude, and renders the impenitent without excuse. Nay, it reflects honour upon the nature, government, and grace of the universal Father of Mercies.

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LECTURE XXII.

On the Misery of the Finally Impenitent.

ISA. lxvi. 24. “*Their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched.*”

DELUSION is the constant companion of depravity. Man is now depraved ; therefore delusion marks every step of his progress through the vale of tears. Many are the delusive hopes which both amuse and imbitter his youthful days. Advancing forward in the path of life, the objects of delusion are only changed, whilst the delusion itself acquires strength. Nor can even repeated disappointments repress the strong propensity of the human mind to encourage delusive hopes.

But amidst the various operations of delusion, none are more fatal than those which respect the future punishment connected with transgression. For although the nature of God, the equity of the Divine law, and the moral responsibility of man, unite their evidence to prove that punishment must follow guilt ; yet intoxicated with the love of sin, the guilty man still continues to transgress with the deluded hope of impunity. To fortify the mind against this fatal delusion, it has been deemed necessary to give the doctrine of eternal punishment an ample and minute discussion. In the

former Lecture, the history of this controversy, and the deductions of reason concerning this important matter, were considered. I now hasten to collect the evidence contained in the sacred record. That this part of the proof may appear in all its celestial vigour, it may be arranged in the following order.

There are numerous passages which positively assert the endless duration of punishment.

The prophet Isaiah pours forth the most affecting lamentation, saying, "The sinners in Zion are afraid : " fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrite: Who among " you shall dwell with devouring fire? Who amongst " us shall dwell with *everlasting* burnings?" In this passage, a solemn appeal is made to the hypocritical race concerning the insupportable and eternal nature of future punishments. The same awful doctrine is taught in the prophecies of Daniel, when he says, " Many of them that sleep in the dust shall awake, " some to *everlasting* life, and some to *everlasting* " shame and contempt." Can words express this truth in a more strong or energetic manner?

Christ himself, the faithful and true witness, taught the nature of future punishment, when he said, " If " thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and " cast them from thee; it is better for thee to enter in " to life halt and maimed, rather than having two " hands and two feet, to be cast into *everlasting* fire."

In the twenty and fifth chapter of Mathew, when describing the proceedings of the Day of Judgment, our Saviour teaches the endless nature of punishment in the very sentence that he will pronounce upon the sons of impenitence. " Depart from me, ye cursed, into ever-

“*lasting* fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” And he concludes that solemn description by informing us, that immediately after judgment, the wicked “ shall “ go away into *everlasting* punishment, but the right-“ eous into life eternal,” Nor will any one dispute that these evidences from the mouth of Christ himself amount to the most complete proof.

Consulting the sacred pages, we find the same doctrine taught by the apostles of our Lord. Hence we hear one saying, “ They who obey not the Gospel of “ our Lord Jesus Christ, shall be punished with *ever-*“ *lasting* destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and “ from the glory of his power.” Of the punishment of fallen angels, another says, “ They are reserved in *ever-*“ *lasting* chains under darkness, unto the judgment of “ the great day. And concerning the punishment of the children of disobedience, a third apostle says, “ the “ smoke of their torment ascendeth up *for ever and ever.*” These different expressions certainly in the most explicit manner reveal the endless duration of future punishment.

Nor is the evidence in the least diminished in strength by what is said by the opposers of this doctrine ; even that the word *everlasting* is sometimes applied to things which in their own nature must, and have come to an end. Of this kind are those expressions where the statutes of Moses are denominated *everlasting* ; the ordinance of circumcision also called an *everlasting* ordinance ; and likewise when mention is made of the *everlasting* mountains. To this objection it is answered, that in every instance where the word *everlasting* is used, it uniformly denotes the duration of that person

or thing spoken of, as long as the Almighty Former of All has rendered the person or the thing capable of enduring. The soul of man is however rendered immortal, therefore capable of an endless duration. The mountains are durable, and will remain for a very long space of time ; hence the word everlasting is applied to them. The statutes and ordinances of Moses continued as long as in the nature of the moral government of God they were destined to continue ; and in consequence of the length of their duration the word everlasting was applied to them. This argument so strongly opposes the Socinians, that they are constrained to acknowledge that “ the word everlasting always and “ everywhere signifies the duration of a thing as far as “ possible, or everlasting signifies the same as to en-“ dure so long as the person or thing ought.

It will farther be granted, that the word everlasting, when it occurs in the New Testament, must be interpreted according to the nature and genius of the Greek language. Since, therefore, this term is universally used in that language to denote subjects or things, which are either in their own nature immortal, or continue for a very long period, it naturally follows, that as the souls of wicked men are capable of immortality, and by their impenitence and rebellion deserve eternal punishment, so equity requires that such “ shall be the “ portion of their cup.” It may be farther remarked, that this is the only word known in that language to express an endless duration. Hence we find it used to denote the endless existence of God himself, and also the endless happiness of the righteous; by consequence, if any solid argument could be drawn from the mere

use of the word, then it might be possible that both the existence of God, and the felicity of the righteous might terminate. The very thought of which involves the greatest absurdity.

There are likewise many passages of Scripture which in the strongest terms deny the termination of future punishments.

Exactly correspondent to this sentiment, we find that the fire of hell is denominated unquenchable fire. "He will burn up the chaff with *unquenchable fire*." Or, as Christ himself more nervously expresseth the sentiment, "the fire that never shall be quenched, " where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not "quenched." It may with confidence be affirmed, that all the treasures of human language cannot afford words more strongly to denote punishment without end. This expression is obviously borrowed from the Prophecy of Isaiah, and it receives peculiar force from this circumstance, that in the prophetic page it runs in the future tense. "Their worm *shall* not die, neither *shall* their "fire be quenched." The relative pronoun *their*, which is here used, likewise proves, that it is persons, and not things, to which this expression refers. "The worm "which dieth not," indicates a self-reproaching conscience, and its connection with the fire clearly shows, that it is not a purifying fire, as some have affirmed. The impenitent in the land of woe are continually sinning, and their consciences are continually reproaching them.

Farther, the word here used generally signifies *a scarlet-dyed worm*; and since sins are by this prophet compared to crimson and scarlet, therefore this scarlet-dyed

worm denotes the continued criminality of the wicked amidst their endless torments. It may be added, that the word *unquenchable*, used by our Lord in the Greek language, not only expresses fire not to be *quenched*, but also fire that cannot be *extinguished*.

The opposers of endless torments collect a number of passages where things of a decaying and perishable nature are said to be without end. Of this nature are the following: "Their land is full of silver; neither is there any end of their treasures; there is no end of their store. Is not thy wickedness great, and thine iniquities infinite? There is no end of all their labour. Of making many books there is no end." These expressions, however, form no just objection against the doctrine for which I contend; because there are many things which may be said to have no end in respect of man, which have nevertheless an end with respect to God. In these different instances mentioned, God certainly knows the end of them all. Are there any treasures, or stores, or iniquities, or books, or things, beyond the power of God to enumerate or calculate? Certainly none. Since, therefore, God has declared in his word, that he will punish the wicked with everlasting destruction, it becomes the children of men "to fear before him, and stand in awe of his righteous judgments."

The endless duration of punishments is likewise confirmed by those declarations which state a comparison between eternal happiness and eternal misery.

Scripture affords several instances of this nature. Our Saviour concludes his description of the final judgment, given in the Gospel of Matthew, by saying, "These

“ shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the
 “ righteous into life eternal.” Another is contained in
 the prophecy of Daniel: “ And many of them that
 “ sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to
 “ everlasting life, and some to everlasting shame and
 “ contempt.” The energy of the first of these expres-
 sions is nervously illustrated by Father Augustine, who
 says, “ Christ declares in one and the same sentence,
 “ that these shall go away into everlasting punishment,
 “ but the righteous into life eternal. If eternity is ap-
 “ plied to both, certainly no solid reason can be assign-
 “ ed why both should not equally denote, either a very
 “ long period of time, but such an one as should termi-
 “ nate, or such a period as should never terminate.
 “ They are equally relative, and to say in this one and
 “ the same sense, that eternal life shall have no end,
 “ but that eternal punishments shall have an end, is
 “ exceedingly absurd and irrational.” These remarks
 of the venerable Father, apply with equal force to
 the latter of these passages.

The same contrast is stated by the evangelist John, when he says, “ He that believeth on the Son, hath
 “ everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son,
 “ shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth upon
 “ him.” In these words, all hope of eternal life is ta-
 ken away from the unbeliever, and he is also represen-
 ted as exposed to the *abiding wrath* of God. The
 wrath of God can only be removed by believing on the
 Son of God: but as this is confined to the present state
 of things, it follows, that the unbeliever must continu-
 ally groan under the weight of unpardoned guilt.

Another argument to prove the endless duration of punishment ariseth from the impenitent being excluded all hope of redemption.

Speaking of the wicked in the prison of misery, our Lord says, "Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." He who has once entered into the place of misery, is not permitted to depart, unless he complies with a certain condition. This passage may be explained by another. Of Christ it is written, "He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet;" and as this is a thing which cannot in one sense come to pass, so long as wicked men and devils exist, therefore his kingdom knows no end. In this view the passage under consideration must be understood. An impossible condition is specified. The sinner can never pay the uttermost farthing, consequently he can never emerge from the place of torment. Man is totally unqualified to make atonement for the sins done here, and he is still rebelling in the land of woe.

Farther, the word of truth declares, that there can be no remission of sin in the world to come. "As the tree falls, it shall lie. Whosoever speaketh a word against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven them, neither in this world, nor in the world to come." In both passages, the solemn truth is equally evident, that, according to the evidence of our Lord, the forgiveness of sin is confined to the present state of existence.

But the very nature of remission proves the impossibility of future forgiveness. The Scriptures expressly teach, that without the shedding of blood, there can be no remission. Nor will every kind of blood suffice to

make atonement. Much blood was shed under the ancient dispensation ; and the heathen altars have in every period streamed with blood. Nor was even human blood spared. Both the human and bestial sacrifices were totally insignificant ; and the sacrifices of Moses received all their significance from their reference to the one sacrifice of Christ, which was to be offered in the end of the world. Hence the blood of Christ is that alone which cleanseth from all sin ; and since the impenitent have contemned that blood when in this world, there can no reason be assigned why its merits should be applied to them in the land of unalleviated anguish. Nor is there any other possible method of salvation made known to intelligent beings. These sentiments are exactly correspondent to the following declarations of Scripture : “ If we sin wilfully, after “ that we have received the knowledge of the truth, “ there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin ; but a cer- “ tain and fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery in- “ dignation, which shall devour the adversaries. By one “ offering Christ hath for ever perfected them who are “ sanctified. Whatever thine hand findeth to do, do “ it with all thy might ; for there is no work nor device “ in the grave, whither thou goest.” The impenitent have sinned wilfully ; they descend to the grave unsanctified ; there is no adequate sacrifice for sin in a coming world ; neither are there any means of grace provided for that state of existence ; hence, those who die impenitent must be for ever miserable.

This same doctrine is proved by the accumulated expressions employed by the sacred writers to describe

the future state of the wicked. "Upon the wicked
 "God shall rain fire and brimstone, and an horrible
 "tempest. A fire goeth before and burneth up his
 "enemies round about. Let my fury come forth like
 "fire, and burn that none can quench it, for the evil
 "of their doings. The wicked shall be turned into
 "hell, and all the nations that forget God." It is like-
 wise denominated "everlasting fire, prepared for the devil
 "and his angels. Everlasting destruction from the
 "presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.
 "Fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.
 "The vengeance of eternal fire. The wine of the wrath
 "of God, poured out without mixture into the cup of
 "his indignation." It is farther called "a second
 "death,—utter darkness,—the blackness of darkness,—
 "the power of death,—the power of darkness, and the
 "gnashing of the teeth." In all these descriptions, both
 the nature and duration of punishment are evidently
 unfolded.

The sacred oracles describe the nature of this truth still farther, by informing us, that all the *causes* of salvation are removed.

The impulsive or moving cause is the mercy of God, which terminates with the present state. Hence says an apostle, "Despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance; but, after thy hardness and impenitent heart, *treasur'est* up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." The obvious meaning of these words, is, that all those who contemn Divine mercy now, shall not share of it in the

world to come, but shall experience the effects of that wrath and vengeance which it has been the employment of their lives to treasure up unto themselves.

The meritorious cause is the blood and merits of Christ ; and these we have proved do not extend beyond the grave. The efficient cause is the operation of the Holy Ghost ; and how can these expect to obtain his influences in the land of woe, who now “ despise the “ Spirit of Grace? My Spirit, saith God, shall not always “ strive with man.” There appears to be a limitation of the influences of Divine Grace even *now*, much more *then*. Farther, the instrumental cause of salvation, is the preaching of the word ; but Scripture limits and restricts the word of mercy to a certain day, nay even to this day, meaning the present state of existence. “ To “ day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. “ Now is the accepted time, and now is the day of sal-“ vation.” Hence they who harden their hearts in this world can never enter into rest.

Preachers are likewise necessary in order to the preaching of the word. To this agree the words of Scripture, “ How shall they hear without a preacher, “ and how can they preach except they be sent?” The Scripture however in no instance gives the least intimation that any shall be sent for such a benevolent purpose. The impossibility of this is strongly marked in these words of the parable of Dives and Lazarus, where Abraham is introduced replying to the entreaty of Dives : “ And besides all this, between us and you, “ there is a great *gulf* fixed, so that they who would pass “ from hence to you cannot, neither can they pass to us “ that would come from hence.” In these words every

syllable conveys a weighty reason. Mention is made of a *gulf*, indicating an impassable region. It is likewise called a *great gulf*, and fixed by the irreversible decree of heaven. Nay, it also renders the way impassable to them that *would* come from either side. Both a moral and physical impossibility is indicated ; nay impossibility in every known form.

I shall close this long proof by mentioning another argument drawn from the nature of Christ's sufferings.

The sacrifice of Christ, in the room of the faithful, was of infinite value ; hence said to procure everlasting righteousness and eternal redemption. From this fundamental article of the Christian faith, the eternal duration of punishment is obviously proved. For if infinite value is required in the ransom paid for transgressors, it unavoidably follows, that the sinner merits infinite punishment, or punishment extended to an infinite duration. The merit of justifying righteousness, and the merit of punishment, must in strict justice be perfectly equivalent. If salvation is eternal, so likewise punishment must be eternal. The force of this evidence cannot be enervated. Reflect, O reader, upon the accumulation of evidence produced to prove the solemn truth, that the punishments of those who die impenitent are eternal. Yes, in no space of time, at no future period, and on no account shall their torments end.

What is the specific nature of that punishment which has been proved so certain ?

No mind can obtain an adequate conception of those torments in reserve for the ungodly beyond the grave. The sacred record however informs us, that they shall

be deprived of every thing which can render comfortable and happy. That they shall have all their depraved appetites and passions without the means of gratification. That they shall have a strong desire after worldly enjoyments, but no means of indulgence. That they shall understand the value of time, health, and the means of grace which they shall enjoy no more for ever. The voice of the gospel is unheard in that land. Then parental, and ministerial, and friendly admonitions, shall all come into sad remembrance, but their salutary influence is lost for ever.

The impenitent shall likewise have a distinct knowledge of that happiness which they have forfeited. Nor can it be denied, that in proportion to their conception of that felicity, so will be their pain in consequence of the loss they have sustained. Can the sons of impenitence, reflect upon all the glory, and splendour, and happiness, which reigns in that blessed place, where God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit, and holy angels, and redeemed men dwell, without feeling the keenest agony and torture of mind?

Farther, the punishment awaiting bad men is not merely negative, but consists in the most acute anguish of mind and pain of body. No small difference of opinion has obtained in the Christian church concerning the nature of coming torments. Some contend for a mental, and some for a material fire. The dispute appears of small importance, because which of the two is admitted, still the punishment is unspeakably severe. Both soul and body are instruments of transgression, therefore justice requires that both be punished. Nor can it be denied, that God can punish either by mental

or material punishment. The bold and strong figures employed in Scripture to describe the misery of the wicked, have led to the supposition, that material flames are the instruments of punishment. This fact, however, cannot be fully ascertained ; and, upon inquiry, it will be found, that as the soul is the chief transgressor, consequently it deserves the severest sufferings. The body cannot commit one act of rebellion without the mind first consenting. However sudden the transition between the resolution and the action, still it is obvious that the one must precede the other. The nature of the human mind likewise proves the same truth. For it is evident, that however keen the sensations of the body, the perceptions of the mind are much more acute; therefore the soul is naturally capable of experiencing the most violent agonies.

This truth may be farther proved from the soul-sufferings of Jesus. He was the representative of the faithful, and he endured that punishment which was due to them ; and in the same we discover the greater severity in his soul. The pains which he endured in his body were nothing compared to those of his mind. Never, or seldom, did he complain of the one, but frequently of the other. “ Jesus groaned in spirit and was “ troubled. He was grieved in spirit ;” and on another day he exclaimed, in all the bitterness of soul, saying, “ My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death :” and on the cross he cried, “ My God, my God, why “ hast thou forsaken me ?” Referring to this fact, he was denominated “ a man of sorrows and acquainted with “ grief.” “ If such things were done in the green tree, “ what shall be done in the dry ?” If such were the in-

expressible agonies of Christ when he stood in the room of the faithful, what must be the sorrows which will compose the cup mingled for the impudent in the land of vengeance? These men wilfully rebelled against God; and must now endure that punishment which his invariable equity deems proper to pour upon them.

It farther appears, both from the principles of equity, and the intimations of Scripture, that those members of the body, and those faculties of the mind, which have been most active in sinning, will be most severely tortured in the land of anguish. Hence in the parable of the rich man, Dives is represented as entreating that Lazarus might be sent with a little water to cool his tongue, because he was tormented in that flame. This seems plainly to indicate, that either by swearing or lying, or blaspheming or mocking, his tongue was an active instrument of transgression. The different degrees of torment are also indicated by that sacred expression; "In as much as she hath sinned, so much the more torment and sorrow give unto her."

There is likewise evidence to support the conclusion, that the wicked will be the cause of torment and sorrow unto each other. In countless instances they are so in the present, and why may they not in the future state? The rule of equity seems, therefore, to indicate, that they who have been most active in seducing and ensnaring others here, shall be upbraided, and harassed, and tormented, by them hereafter. To this corresponds a sentiment in the forementioned parable, where Dives intreated that Lazarus might be "sent unto his brethren to warn them that they also might not come into that place of torment." Not certainly that he had

any benevolent desire for their salvation, for such a disposition is not consistent with confirmed depravity, but the only reason which can be discovered is, that his own torments might not be increased by the reproaches of his brethren whom he had seduced into the path of vice.

Those who by their example or advice are active in leading others to sin, ought most seriously to ponder this sentiment. Let the reader take all these considerations which have been suggested into one combined view, then let him say what must be the awful nature and certainty of that punishment which awaits the wicked. Nor can these escape the vengeance of the Most High. Mankind ought also gratefully to reflect upon the advantages of the Scriptures, which contain information so full and explicit upon this interesting subject, and who draw aside the veil which covers the future, and reveal the coming situation both of the righteous and of the wicked. “ May divine grace prepare us for coming felicity ; and may we hear the joyful sentence in that eventful day—“ Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

LECTURE XXIII.

The Future Happiness of the Righteous.

MAT. xxv. 34. “*Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*”

By the indulgent care of Providence we are now, my friends, arrived at the concluding article of our Course. According to our plan, this is the coming felicity of the righteous. Nor are any arguments necessary to show its vast importance. The whole of a holy life on earth has a respect to the coming recompence of reward. Thousands in every age have experienced the beneficial effects of holiness, and, amidst the agonies of death, have exulted in the hope of better things to come.

Nor will it be denied, that the universal voice of mankind has estimated the true value of things by their unavoidable consequences. It is therefore of small importance, although the path of the just be now dark, rough, and intricate, and temptations, dangers, and sorrows, await in the progress, when the termination is everlasting life. What has the wicked man gained when God taketh away his soul? Where then are his unhallowed pleasures, carnal desires, ambitious pursuits, worldly grandeur, immense treasures, splendid honours, and acquired applause? They are forever gone!

But revelation not only informs us, that the righteous has hope in his death, that there will be a state of future rewards, that the righteous will immediately at death enter into perfect felicity, but also instructs us concerning the nature of future happiness.

Let us attend to the evidence which proves the actual existence of a future state.

But here it may be said, why enter upon the proof of a doctrine so universally acknowledged? The small influence however which this belief has upon the generality of mankind, renders it frequently necessary to place before the public mind the evidence in all its native energy and divine force.

To all who admit the uncreated, unlimited, and almighty power of God, the existence of a future state will appear a *possible* thing.

That Almighty Being who created and still preserves this stupendous universe, can certainly reward his friends, and punish his enemies. He who formed the conscious thinking soul, can prolong her existence after her departure from her present dwelling. When viewed in connection with Divine power, the idea of a future state involves no absurdity or contradiction. Nor does the conception of such a state overpower or confound any principle implanted in human nature.

Numerous considerations also indicate a high degree of *probability* concerning the reality of a future state.

In every man there exists a power of thinking, reflecting, willing, judging, and performing various actions; which active conscious principle is called the soul. Although this conscious principle now dwells in the clay tabernacle, it is of a nature perfectly distinct,

And such is the excellénce and utility of this principle, that the entire extinction of thought and consciousness is terrible to every mind, unless to those who act such a part, that annihilation is their best refuge. " It is " truly astonishing, that some men should be found " spontaneously degrading themselves to the level of " the brutes that perish, satisfying themselves with pur- " suits and enjoyments of a brutal nature while they " live, and contented to lie down with the beast in " death, to rise no more. They first make it their in- " terest that there should be no hereafter, and then " they fondly persuade themselves that there shall be " none."

The strong *desire* of immortality, which is universal- ly engraven on the human mind, affords increasing evi- dence.

It is inconsistent with the goodness of God to suppose, that he would implant any virtuous desire in the hu- man mind, which he never intended to gratify. The idea is absurd, that God would either create or indulge a vicious propensity in man, but it corresponds both with his goodness and perfection, that he should do so to a virtuous propensity. The existence of this lauda- ble desire in the human mind proves the design of the benevolent Creator to confer ample gratification. The words of inspiration aid this reasoning : " God will ful- " fil the just desire of those that fear him."

The present *mode* of Divine government indicates the reality of future felicity.

The justice and wisdom of the Universal Governor are covered with dark and impenetrable clouds, if the history of man is merely confined to the present world.

What an amazing exertion of wisdom and power has been displayed in the forming, adorning, and sustaining the material universe? What a powerful and wise manifestation of Divine perfection has been given in the moral government of its rational inhabitants? But would it not seem unaccountably strange, that all this should have been done if the characters and actions of men have no reference to a coming scene? Do not countless facts evince, that some good and some bad men now exist, and have existed in every age? Are not the indulgent blessings of providence scattered with a promiscuous hand? Are not vile men often exalted, and holy men depressed? And does not this unequal distribution of rewards clearly indicate, that this is only the morning of existence, and that the perfect day will fully vindicate the ways of God to all his intelligent offspring.

The evidence however does not terminate in mere possibility or mere probability; it reaches to *positive* certainty.

But from whence is this evidence deduced. Not from the deductions of reason, but the assertions of Scripture. That God has given a revelation of his will to men, and among other things a revelation concerning a future state, is confirmed by sacred evidence. The doctrine of future happiness is taught by the declarations of the Old Testament, some of them by their own evidence, and others more clearly by the interpretations of the New. The antediluvian Enoch walked with God, and was not, for God translated him to that world where "the pure in heart shall see God." According to the writer of the Hebrews, the venerable

patriarchs, in the ages that immediately succeeded that of Enoch, " desire a better country, even an heavenly, " and earnestly looked for a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God." Amidst all his calamities, the patient Job exulted in the view of futurity, saying, " I know that my Redeemer liveth, " and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the " earth ; and though after my skin worms destroy this " body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." The ancient leader of Israel despised the riches of Egypt, " having " a respect unto the recompense of the reward." The holy David rejoiced in the certain prospect of beholding " the face of God in righteousness, and of being " satisfied when he should awake with his likeness." Therefore said he, " My heart is glad, and my glory " rejoiceth ; my flesh also shall rest in hope ; for thou " wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer " thine Holy One to see corruption : Thou wilt show " me the path of life ; in thy presence is fulness of joy ; " at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore." Daniel, the man highly beloved, tells us that " many of them " that sleep in the dust shall awake, some to everlasting " life, and some to everlasting shame and contempt." Another prophet introduceth Christ as saying, " Awake " and sing, ye that dwell in the dust, together with my " dead body shall they arise." And a third says, " Death is swallowed up in victory."

But the New Testament excels in splendour, and removes the darkness which so long veiled the glories of immortality.

There life and immortality shine in all their native lustre. There Jesus himself assures us, " that the pure

“ in heart shall see God. That it is his Father’s good pleasure to give his people the kingdom ; and that “ His kingdom is not of this world.” That in the day of final judgment, the Judge will say to them on his right hand, “ Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit “ the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation “ of the world ; and that the righteous shall go away “ into everlasting light.” In equally strong terms the apostles proclaim the reality of coming bliss, when they said, “ God who cannot lie, hath promised eternal life “ before the world began.” Nay, that he had put the matter beyond all doubt, having confirmed his promise by an oath, and raised up his own Son from the dead. Exalted and numerous are the descriptions which they everywhere give of a future state, and nervous and animated are the arguments drawn from hence, to enforce that conduct which is pleasing to God, beneficial to society, and dignifying to the individual. Contemplate then the whole of this accumulated evidence, and say if it does not amount to moral certainty. Beholding this, who can question the existence of revealed felicity ? In short, this evidence must either be depended upon, or men must say that they will admit of no testimony whatever except that of their senses. To constitute the strongest degree of evidence, the witness must be qualified to judge of the fact ; he must have proper opportunities to acquire a knowledge of it, and his dispositions must be honest and candid in his relation of the same. Unquestionably all these were united in Jesus, who is the faithful and true witness, who himself came down from Heaven, and has assured

us, that there is a future state of felicity awaiting all his chosen, separated, praying, and devoted people.

But when do the righteous enter upon this state of perfect felicity?

Some reply, that they remain in a state of senseless inactivity until the morning of the resurrection. Others say, that they immediately enter into glory, when they change their present mode of existence. Which of these two appears to carry the evidence of truth?"

To this I answer, that the Socinian idea concerning the souls sleeping until the morning of the resurrection, is not only uncomfortable to the believer, but unsupported by Scripture and true philosophy.

It is contrary to true philosophy, for the mind of man is an active, conscious, thinking being; therefore, to suppose such a being deprived of thought and consciousness, which compose the essentials of its nature, is the same as losing its existence altogether. Since then this senseless inactivity includes the annihilation of existence, there could of consequence be no resurrection. It is an absurdity in language to speak of raising that which does not exist in any one possible form. If therefore, upon the Socinian principles, there is any resurrection, it must be a new creation, and not a resurrection. Farther, there can be no reason assigned why, if the soul sleeps to the morning of the resurrection, it may not continue to sleep for ever. A mind devoid of thought and consciousness, and matter devoid of solidity and extension, are equally absurd and contradictory ideas. True philosophy therefore concludes that the soul immediately at death enters into glory,

and there, in a state of active intelligence, enjoys the full perfection of its powers, until it joins its material companion in the morning of the resurrection.

That the departed spirits of the just enter into immediate happiness, is confirmed by a variety of Scripture arguments.

The parable of Dives and Lazarus is formed upon this radical idea. Nor let any venture to say, that infinite veracity would build a parable upon a falsehood, or mere fiction. But this truth is supported by more affecting evidence. If there is any period in which the truth can be expected with clearness and precision, it must be in the moments of death. That mind must be singularly depraved and hardened which can stand on the verge of time, with the throne of the Judge and all the solemn realities of eternity in full view, and then venture to falsify or deceive ; and if this is universally admitted concerning man, what must be the fact concerning the sinless Son of God ? Behold him then amidst his expiring agonies, placed upon the accursed tree, and see what came to pass ! “ Then were there “ two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand “ and another on the left. And one of the malefactors “ which were hanged, railed on him, saying, if thou be “ Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering, “ rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing “ thou art in the same condemnation : and we in- “ deed justly ; for we receive the due reward of our “ deeds : but this man hath done nothing amiss. And “ he said unto Jesus, Lord remember me when thou “ comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, “ Verily I say unto thee, to day shalt thou be with me

“ in paradise.” Here is evidence, strong, affecting, and conclusive. Convinced of his guilt and danger, and also of the character and power of Jesus, the expiring criminal supplicates, saying, “ Lord remember me when “ thou comest into thy kingdom.” Ever on the wing to perform acts of mercy during his life, and equally ready in the hour of death, he instantly replied, “ Ve-“ rily I say unto thee, to day shalt thou be with me in “ paradise.” This language is both determinate and strong. The word “ verily,” indicates strong certainty; but, used by Jesus, it indicates the most positive cer-
tainty. Jesus, to confirm his faith, and to invigorate his hope, also mentions the time, “ to day”—the place, “ in paradise,” and the company with whom he should associate, “ thou shalt be with me.” Or, in other words, that as certainly as Jesus himself should be there to day, so certainly would he bring the dying penitent to be with him. Hence every kind of evidence and specifi-
cation enters into this comfortable saying. Similar is the evidence contained in the ardent wish of Paul, when he desires “ to be absent from the body, and present “ with the Lord.”

It is also sufficiently evident, that the idea of sleeping in the grave until the resurrection is both uncomfor-
table and unpleasant.

Man is formed an intelligent and active being, and his most refined and rational enjoyments are derived from conscious activity. His pleasures consist in active pursuit, more than indolent enjoyment. Attainment is often the tomb of pleasure. Without activity human life would stagnate, and pleasure abandon the dwellings of mortals. If this activity forms such an important

ingredient in the cup of human life, what must be its singular importance in the happiness of those whose minds have been enlightened, renewed, invigorated, and rendered spiritually active? It is therefore reasonable to infer, that a state of inactivity or sleep would neither tend to honour the Divine perfections, nor to gratify the finer feelings of humanity. The contrary opinion, however, sheds a pleasant lustre over the former, and gives ample gratification to the latter.

The nature of future happiness next claims our attention.

Endless felicity is the great object after which the nations have panted. The learned and the ignorant, the civilized and the savage, the prince and the peasant, have all bent their longing eyes towards a propitious deity, and a happier state of existence. The light of nature, however, could only afford feeble expectations, and eager desires. The honour was reserved to revelation to unveil the future world, and display in all their celestial splendour the future dwellings of the spirits of the just.. Not only is a state of perfect felicity revealed, but a variety of circumstances are mentioned, which tend to describe the nature of that felicity. Entering, however, upon this subject, it may be remarked, that the powers of man cannot fully understand or describe the nature of heavenly joy. The subject is too sublime, and too elevated, for the feeble conceptions of mortals. That world is invisible, and the realities thereof are unseen ; therefore, it is very difficult to conceive what will compose the comfort which God hath in store for his chosen.

The man who is acquainted with the nature and

powers of the human mind, will readily admit, that knowledge is chiefly derived from his external senses. It is true, that the usual mode of speaking upon this subject is, that sensation and perception are the two radical sources of all our information. But a little degree of reflection will also evince, that few in number would be our perceptions, were it not for the aid of our sensations. Correspondent to this fact, in the history of the human mind, God has been pleased to represent the nature of the heavenly state by those images and external objects with which our senses are most conversant, in order to aid the weakness of humanity, in a matter where all the hopes of glory centre. We are, however, sufficiently guarded against those gross conceptions of heaven which the deluded followers of Mahomet have learned from that impostor.

In the sacred page, the richest and most brilliant images which nature or art can afford, are collected in order to give some faint ideas of the opulence, grandeur, and happiness of that place. Referring to the unsearchable riches of Christ, the blessings of heaven are denominated “ treasures which moth cannot corrupt, nor thieves break through to steal.” Alluding to the perfection and extent of the redemption procured by the Son of God, heaven is called “ An inheritance “ which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not “ away.” To describe its unfading glory, it is also said to be a “ far more exceeding and an eternal weight of “ glory.” To aid our conception still farther, the happiness of heaven is compared to those situations of man where human felicity is enjoyed in greatest abundance and perfection. It is called a paradise, in allusion to

the purity, perfection, and bliss, which Adam enjoyed in Eden. Alluding to the incessant desire of repose from the evils and calamities of human life, displayed in the conduct of men, and also to the rest of the children of Israel in Canaan, from their wanderings and toils in the wilderness, it is called a rest which remaineth for the people of God ; a rest from the turbulence of passion, the eagerness of pursuit, the vexation of disappointment, the acuteness of pain, the anguish of sorrow, and all the calamities of this sinful region.

Heaven is also compared to an house or home, where love, joy, peace, comfort, and all the domestic virtues dwell ; an house, however, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, and in which there are many mansions. Heaven is also compared to a city, whose builder and maker is God. The foundation composed of precious stones, the gates of pearl, and the streets of pure gold, and the glory of God and of the Lamb eradiating the same. A city into which no impurity doth enter, and into which all the kings and princes of the earth do bring their glory and their honour. The consummate felicity and unfading joy which reign there, are beautifully described by the beloved disciple : “ There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, nor pain ; for the former things are passed away. He that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more. But the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water. God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

But the idea of human happiness proceeds yet farther,

and reaches even to a kingdom and a throne. But in extent, splendour, regularity, order, population, strength, and glory, the kingdom awaiting the righteous is far superior to all the kingdoms of this world. “ This kingdom shall break in pieces and consume all “ other kingdoms.” All the glory and splendour of earthly kingdoms are derived from this, and shall then be restored to their ancient dwelling, and employed to aggrandize and beautify the same. Such is the eternal abode of the kingdom of kings, and of priests of the first-born, who are written in heaven, “ a royal priest-“ hood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, to shew forth “ the praises of Him who hath called to glory and to “ virtue.”

But after what manner will the saints exist in heaven?

To this it is answered :—In death, body and soul are rent asunder, but in the resurrection they are re-united. Then the mind shall acquire a dignity, strength, and vivacity, far beyond the present conceptions of man. Then no feebleness, nor ignorance, nor error, nor inattention, shall retard the progress of knowledge. For, in death, all those impediments of which the faithful now complain, are perfectly removed. Then the perception will be clear and lively, the judgment solid and determinate, the memory strong and retentive. “ Now,” said an apostle, “ I know in part, but then I shall “ know even as I am known.” Then all the moral powers of the soul shall be refined, and acquire a perfection unknown even in the days of innocence. Then regeneration shall issue in glory. Then the effects of human depravity shall all be removed. Then the soul shall exist in a state of the highest comfort and

joy; and, as it is now " created in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after the image of God, so it shall then behold his face in righteousness, and shall be satisfied with his likeness." How glorious shall the soul of man then become? To what a heavenly vigour and glory shall it then advance?

But the body will then also attain consummate perfection.

" It is sown a natural, and is raised a spiritual body. " It is sown in dishonour, and raised in glory. Jesus shall change the vile bodies of his people, that they may be fashioned like unto his own glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself." The human body shall then be freed of all that imperfection and frailty with which it is now encumbered. Then no languor, nor fatigue, nor weariness, shall impede the mind in its mental excursions. Then all the senses shall be refined, strengthened, and enlarged. Nay, no language can describe that glory and splendour which shall eradiate both soul and body in the upper region.

What will be the employments of the righteous in this transcendently glorious place?

The faculties of the blessed are only adequate to the conception of their employments and pleasures. The eloquent silence of humble hope is more becoming this subject, than the extravagant indulgence of fancy. Man may, however, with adoring caution, follow the footsteps of revelation. Expressive of the active employments of the redeemed, John describes them as standing before the Throne and before the Lamb, and resting

neither day nor night, but incessantly singing the praises of the Lamb.

Man is a social being. Both the mutual dependence and native inclinations of mankind induce them to associate together. Placed in a region stored with pleasures, yet deprived of companions, man would languish with sorrow. But here social felicity does not arrive at full vigour. The frailties, the vices, the dissensions, the suspicions, and the distresses of those whom we love, all retard its growth. But friendship shall be matured in glory. Here mutual bliss, and perpetual harmony, shall flourish in all the verdure and strength of perfection. Social felicity circulates among these benevolent spirits, and the voice of discord is never heard. Agreeable to this view of heavenly enjoyment, John says, “After this I beheld, and lo! a “great multitude, which no man could number, of all “nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood “before the Throne, and before the Lamb, clothed “with white robes, and palms in their hands.” Washed from all the stains of depravity, the just shall then mingle with Patriarchs, and Prophets, and Legislators, and Princes, and Heroes, and Apostles, and Martyrs, and all those illustrious men who have distinguished themselves either as the servants of God, or the benefactors of men. To use the words of an elegant writer, “They “whom distant seas and regions now divide, whose “languages and manners are at present strange to one “another, shall then mingle in the same assembly. No “situation is so remote, and no station so unfavourable, “as to preclude access to the heavenly felicity. A “road is opened by the Divine Spirit to those blissful

" habitations, from all corners of the earth, and from all conditions of human life ; from the peopled city, and from the solitary desert ; from the cottages of the poor, and from the palaces of kings ; from the dwellings of ignorance and simplicity, and from the regions of science and improvement." They shall " come from the east and from the west, from the north and from south, and sit down in the kingdom of God."

What will be the subjects of conversation in heaven ?

To know God, is the highest perfection of mental bliss ; but this knowledge is very limited here below. God is infinite, and all that the finite mind can discover of him in any state of existence, is only partial. In heaven, however, more strong and lively conceptions will be obtained. Then the mind will know him to the utmost possible extent of a finite perfected mind. For it is abundantly evident, that even in Heaven the blessed angels and glorified spirits cannot fully unfold the nature and perfections of God. In every stage of created perfection there shall be a specific difference between created and uncreated existence. Still a bound which angelic and human strength can never pass. The discoveries of heaven, however, shall far exceed those of earth. Wonderful is the display now given of the perfections of God in Creation, Providence, and Redemption ; but this is only partial, compared with what shall be given in yonder world. Then the mysteries of nature in all their variety, and greatness, and wisdom, shall prove the fruitful source of conversation. Then Solomon, who spoke and wrote of the wonders of nature, shall converse with Paul, who spake and wrote of the mysteries of Redemption.

Then Moses, who wrote the history of creation, and of the morning of time, shall converse with John, who prophesied of the dissolution of the world, and of the events which were to occupy the evening of time. Then Enoch, the seventh from Adam, shall converse with him who shall be the seventh from the end, concerning the fulfilment of the prophecy which he uttered, saying, "The Lord shall descend with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken." Then Noah shall cast his eyes over the whole of his family, which only consisted of eight souls; when dwelling amidst the devouring billows, now become a multitude, which no man can number; and whilst he relates what was the miraculous goodness of the Lord to him in the day of universal destruction, he shall hear from them what miracles of mercy the Lord wrought amidst all the billows and waves of calamity, temptation, and sorrow. Then Abraham, the father of the faithful, shall converse both with his natural and spiritual sons, and learn the triumphs of their faith, and the extent of their prosperity. Then Patriarchs shall converse with Prophets, Prophets with Apostles, Apostles with Ministers. Distinction lost, and imperfection ended, knowledge and social joy shall circulate from heart to heart throughout all the ranks of glory. Nor can human language describe what shall be the ravishing and rapid information which shall then be obtained. Then the wise and mysterious operations of Providence, the universal his-

tory of mankind, the conduct of thousands, and the interesting narrative of individuals, shall afford materials of heavenly conversation.

But the operations of salvation shall chiefly employ and expand the glorified soul.

Transporting soul! reviving thought! that those very subjects which have engaged our attention, instructed and comforted our souls during this Course of Lectures, shall, with others, compose the materials of endless conversation. How delightful shall be the employment to dwell upon the contrivance, the execution, and the consequence of the purpose which God purposed in himself before the world began! That plan on which the mind of God has been bent, and the fulness of the Godhead exerted! That plan in which all divine existence, glory, wisdom, power, greatness, goodness, mercy, and love, do centre! Where "mercy and truth meet together, "righteousness and peace mutually embrace each other." What unequalled wonders concentrate in the scheme of salvation! God appearing in the greatness of eternal strength to create a world! Man, the lord of this lower world, is formed after the image of God, and shines in the splendid robes of innocence. He rebels; his glory is sullied, and his happiness lost. Divine mercy springs forth; the guilty is spared. Salvation and restoration are promised. The exertions of Mercy and the rapidity of Time hasten the accomplishment. The time arrives, and God is manifested in the flesh. In human nature he reveals the secrets of salvation; displays the beauties of unstained innocence; and dies to make atonement. He visits the dark abode of the grave; enlightens its chambers, and changes its nature.

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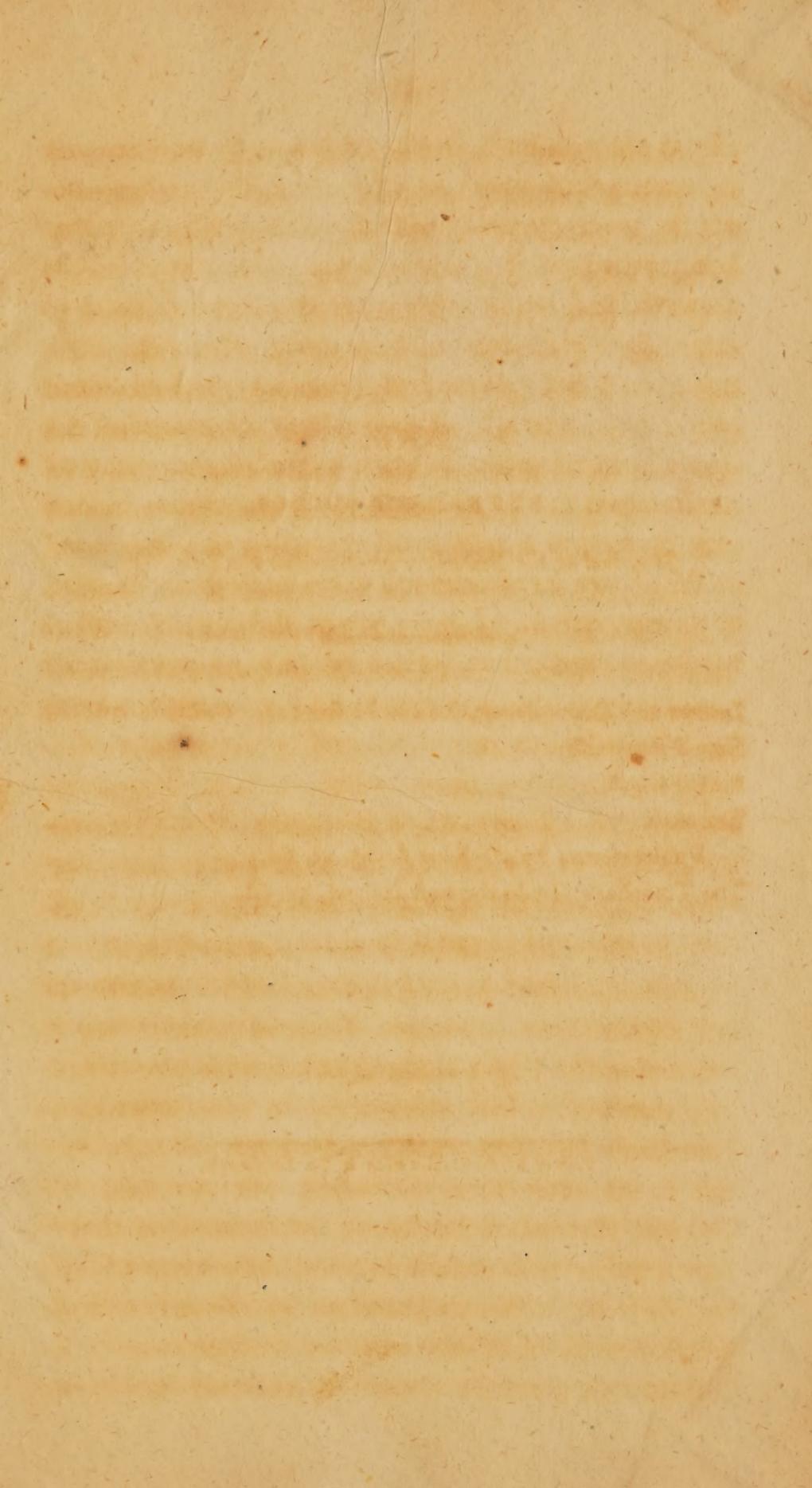
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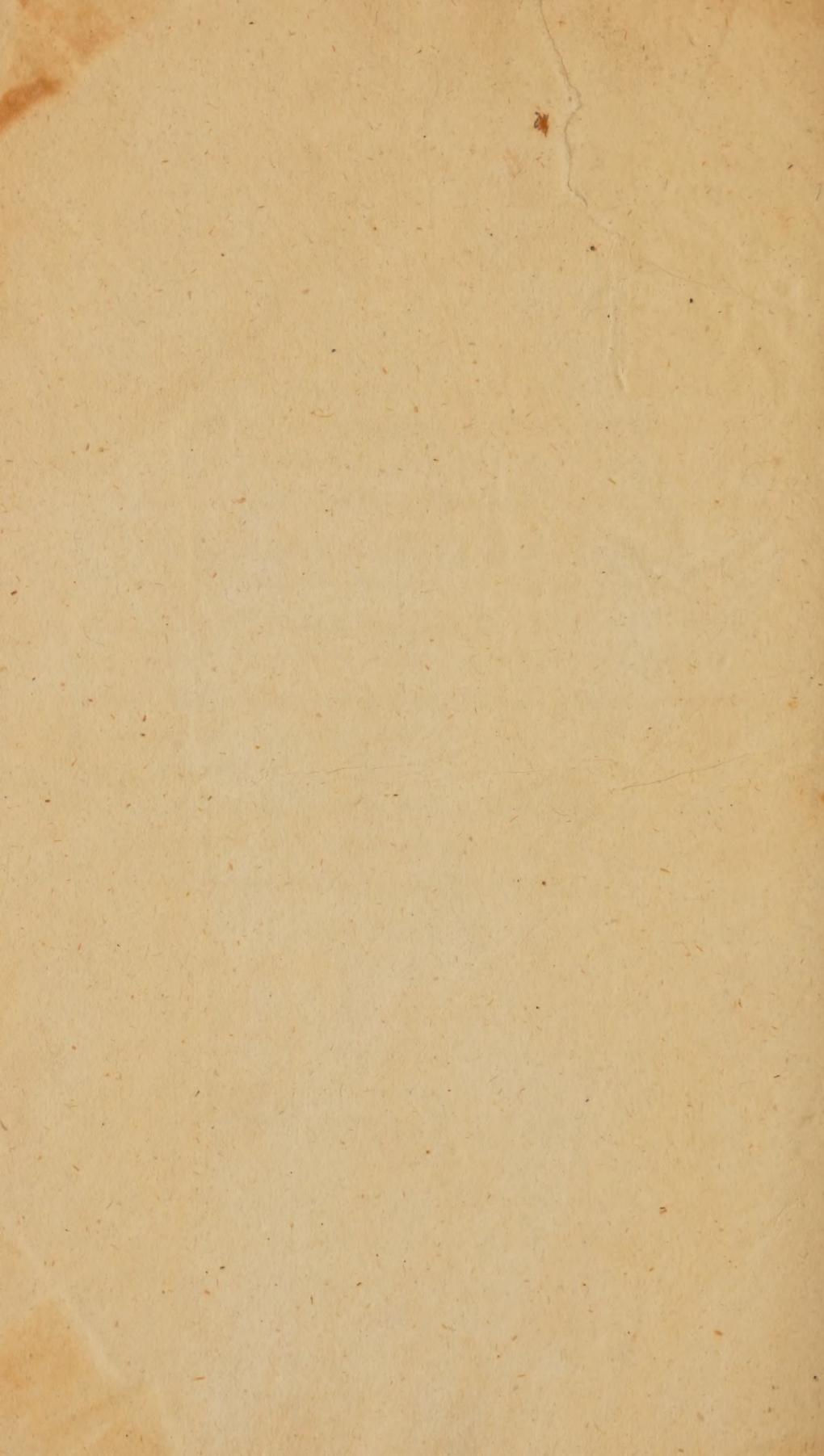
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